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Lalique's Art Nouveau Jewelry
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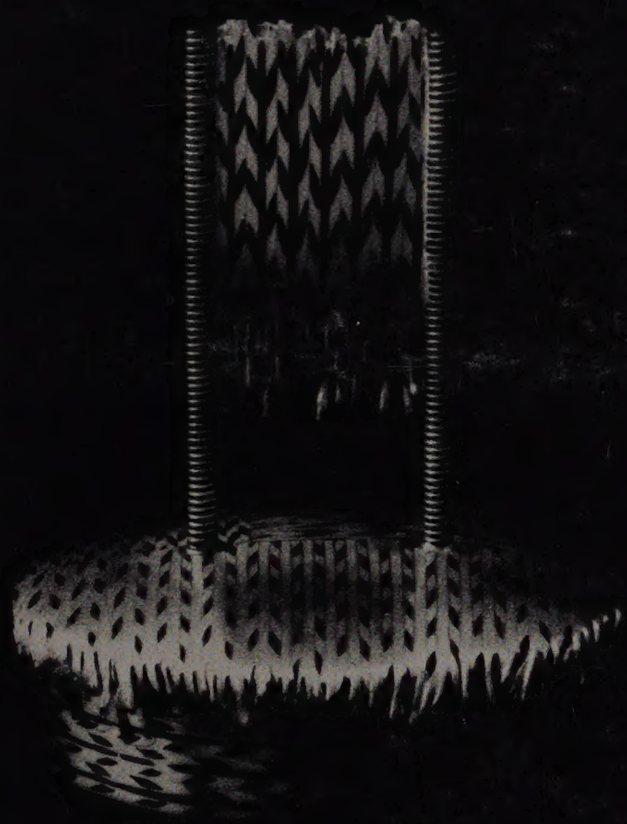

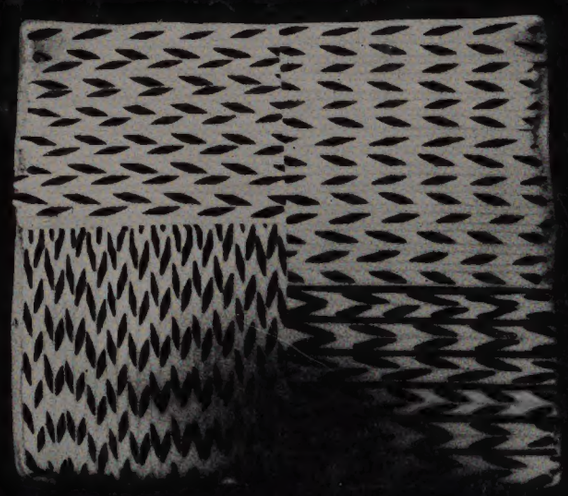

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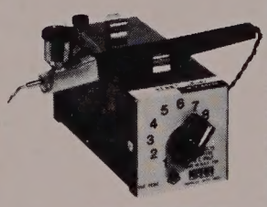

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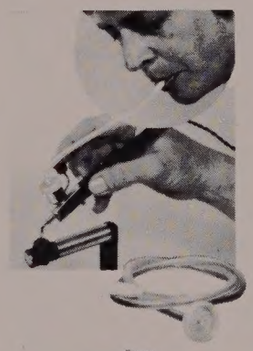

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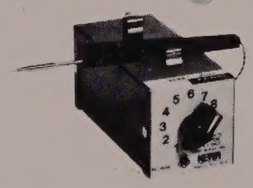

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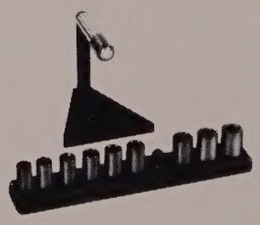

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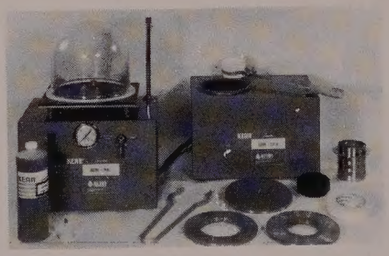

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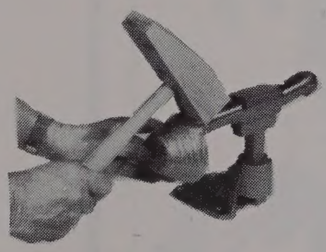

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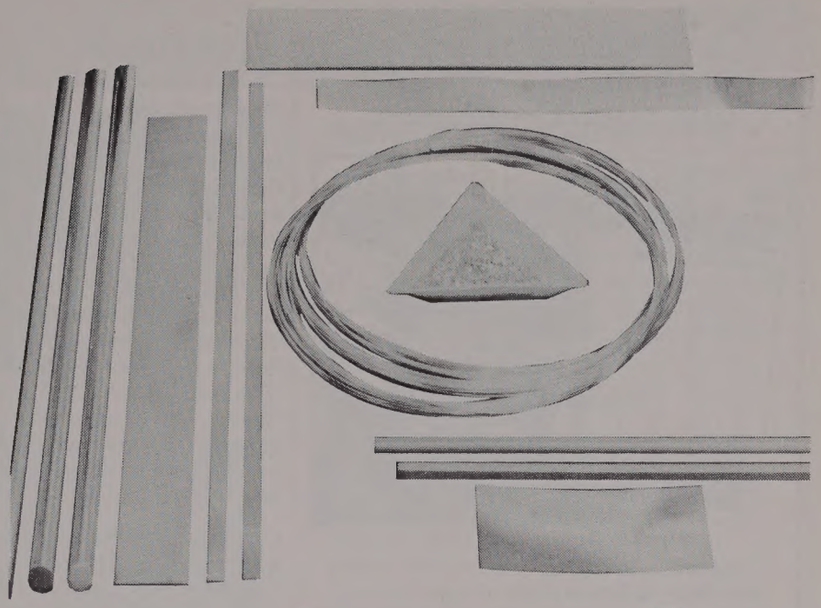

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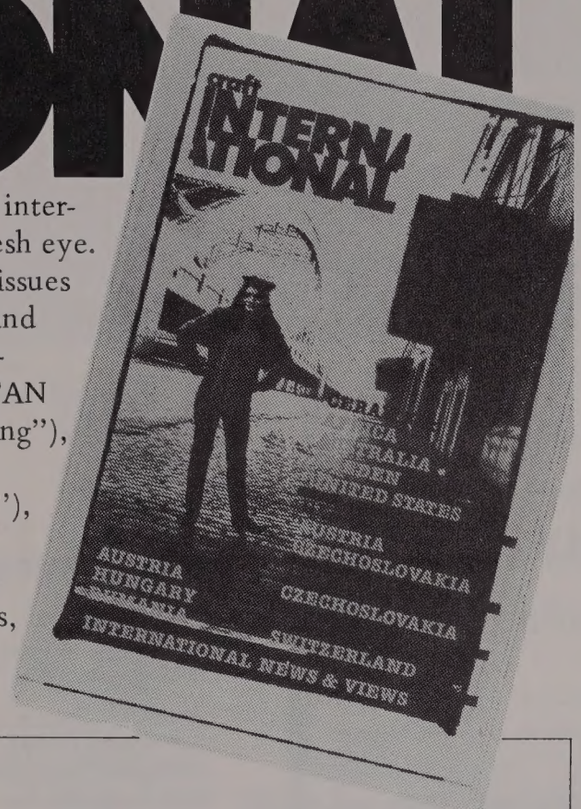

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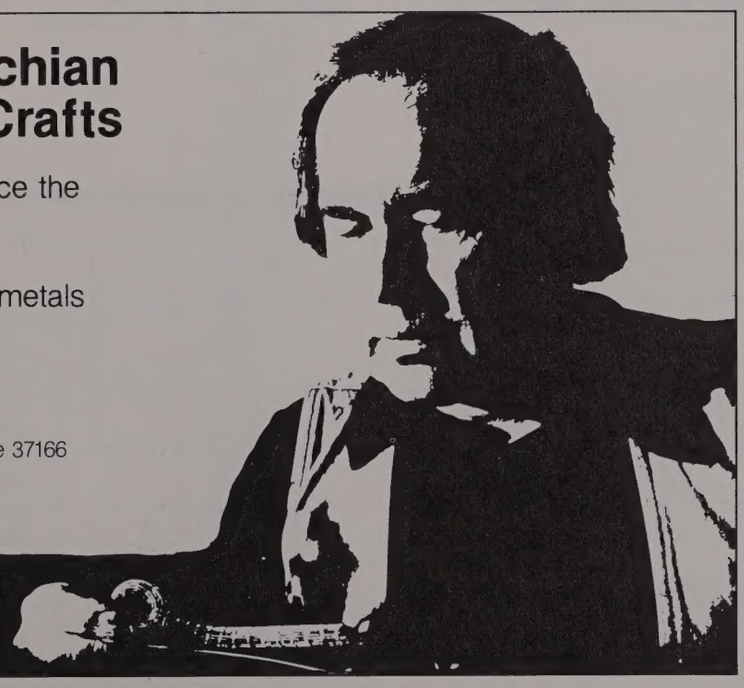

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Published quarterly by the Society of North American Goldsmiths (SNAG), a nonprofit organization, 8589 Wonderland NW, Clinton, OH 44216. Annual membership rates, which include a subscription to *Metalsmith*: $100 for Pro Members and $30 for Associate and Student Members and Institutions.

Address membership and advertising inquiries to: Bill Neumann, SNAG, 8589 Wonderland NW, Clinton, OH 44216.
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ISSN 0270-1146.

Second class postage permit (pending) at Clinton, OH and additional mailing offices.

Address editorial material to: Sarah Bodine, Managing Editor, 35 West 84th Street, New York, NY 10024. Unsolicited manuscripts and photos will be handled with care, but the magazine assumes no responsibility for them. All material must be accompanied by a self-addressed, stamped envelope. The opinions expressed in *Metalsmith* are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent those of the trustees of SNAG or the staff of *Metalsmith*.

Printed by Capitol City Press, Montpelier, VT 05602

Typesetting by Roberts/Churcher, Brooklyn, NY

Cover: *Brooch with Stand No. 1*, Hiroko Sato Pijanowski, copper, fine and sterling silver, twisted wire and soldered inlay, 3½x2½x2½", 1979

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Editorial

No longer can a goldsmith like Benvenuto Cellini board a carriage for Rome and be assured of getting an education among the major master craftsmen. Today he would have to jet around the world, visiting Ipsilanti, Michigan, Toronto, Canada and Porvoo, Finland. Crafts are no longer community or guild based but worldwide.

Along with this growth and proliferation of crafts in modern times comes the need for a vehicle through which craftsmen can communicate with one another and with their public. Recently, craftsmen themselves have taken the reins and begun to voice their opinions through their own publications.

The burgeoning of newsletters, small magazines and exhibition catalogs testifies to this need for information exchange, the desire for a showcase for work and a forum for debate, the curiosity to see inside another creative mind at work and the necessity for keeping abreast of innovations and technical research in the field.

Potters, woodworkers, blacksmiths, fiber artists and metalsmiths all have their publications and voices today. Dedication, spirit, individuality and pride in work are now being passed on to a second and third generation of craftsmen.

A magazine can reach even the most isolated of its readers, offering information and work which otherwise would be unavailable. The reader's survey results, reported later in this issue, show that most metalsmiths rank magazines the highest priority in where they get information on their craft.

You must consider this magazine an important link in the educational chain. Through it you must pass along knowledge, discoveries and ideas to support individual growth and to make metalsmithing a recognizable force.
SB

Lalique

by Vittoria Cozzi-Olivetti

". . . and I feel, I am absolutely convinced that full justice has not been done him yet. He ranks among the greatest figures in the history of Art at all times, and his so personal material, touch, his exquisite imagination will exite the admiration of future elites. . . "

from a letter of Calouste Gulbenkian to Lalique's daughter on the artist's death, 1945[1]

A path in a park amid magnificent effects of sun and shadow through rich foliage, flowered bushes, down a green slope covered with tampa grass—very Laliquian in color and design—leads to a pond and, bordering it, to the museum wing of the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation in Lisbon, Portugal. This well organized and pleasantly designed modern building hosts and displays the love for art and refined taste of Mr. Calouste Gulbenkian in a very rich collection, ranging from Mesopotamian, Egyptian and Classical to Islamic, Armenian and European art from the ninth to the 20th centuries. Every aspect of man's creativity is represented here, but metalwork occupies an outstanding place, with a small group of Hellenistic jewelry (one splendid piece of gold, perhaps one of the most perfect specimens of a gold earring found up to now), French, 18th century goldsmith work and, above, the collection of René Lalique's Art Nouveau jewelery.

"Calouste Gulbenkian was, in a way, the man who motivated and stimulated the art of this artist, whose enthusiastic friend and devoted admirer he was. We have no doubt that his many commissions and the understanding he always showed . . . provided the prime incentive of Lalique's creative work and achievement."[2] The collection of Lalique's jewelery was acquired by Gulbenkian over a 20-year period, from 1899 to 1920, some directly from the artist and some from exhibitions. Not only does it include the majority of the artist's most significant pieces, but it also constitutes a body of work which thoroughly exemplifies the various stages and facets of Lalique's creativity and personality.

The 77 pieces of jewelery are displayed, together with vases and other glass objects, in a specially designed room. Upon entering it, one has the impression of opening—and stepping into—a precious coffer. The light is dim (too dim in places); the cases follow one another in a continuously curving, sinuous line protruding and receding along the walls. Gulbenkian's devotion to Lalique is as real and tangible here as any of the pieces displayed. There are no explanatory notes about the objects as there are for articles exhibited in the other sections of the museum. The pieces are left there, untouched by word, to illuminate the viewer's mind solely with their presence, and the mystery is left to the one who can capture it.

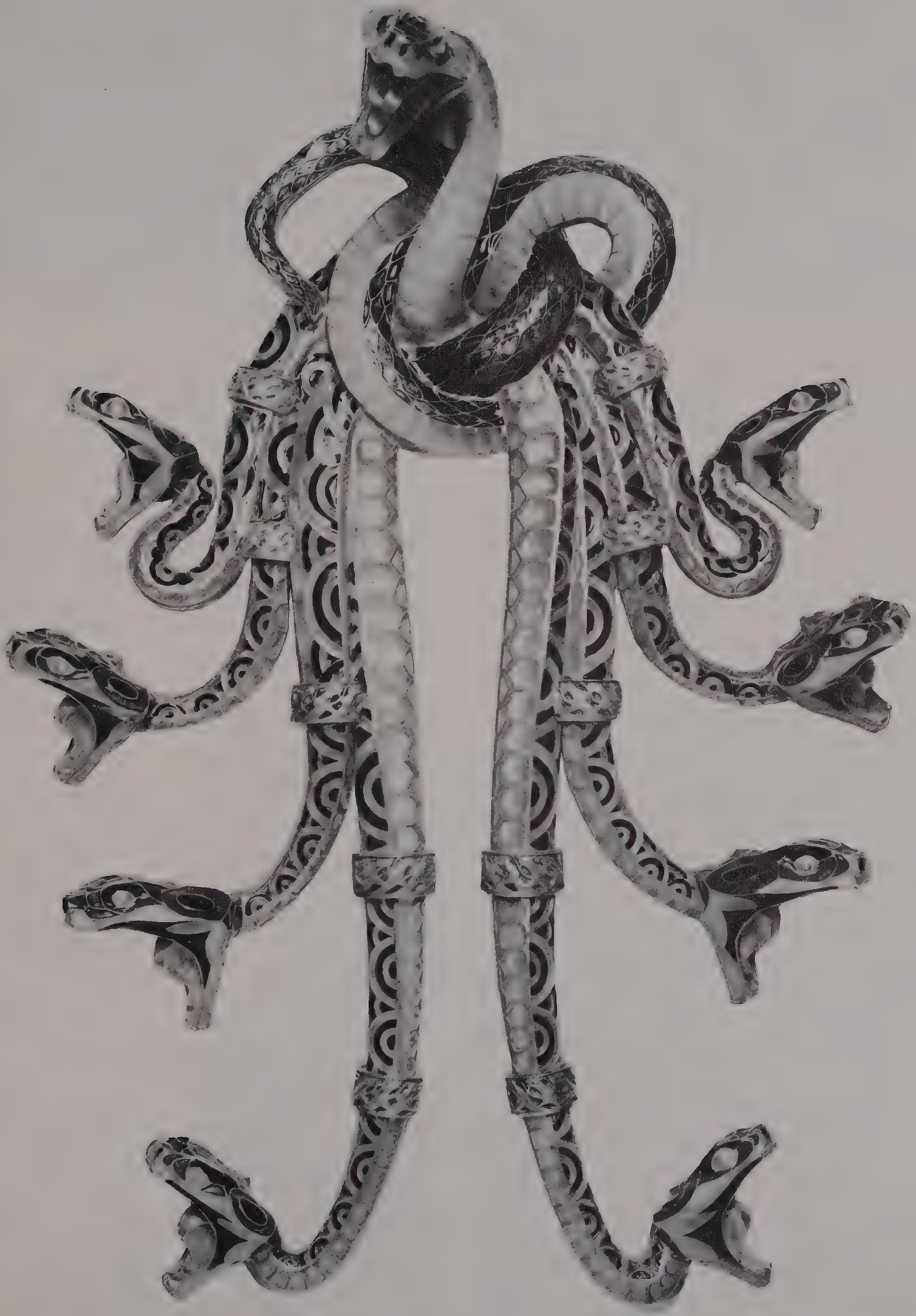
The specially created room is in keeping with Lalique's meticulous care in designing and setting the environment of his exhibits at the various Paris Salons. In the Salon of 1900, the most important exhibit of Lalique's jewelery, the pieces were placed "in a vitrine constructed with a grille of iron accented with female bronze figures. This grille served as a background screen in front of which the jewels were displayed on a ground of white moiré silk. Lambrequins of grey were appliqued with velour bats. The rug and draperies were of grey. . . . A mirror reflected two huge bronze serpents."[3] Pol Neveu, a fin-de-siècle reviewer of the exhibit, gives a more appropriately luscious description: "Underneath a flight of bats in a sky of grey, some women, joyous to be living among so many marvels, twist their lovingly modelled bronze torsos, unfold their wings, the veins of which join and grow together in a soft reel before the fabulous jewels layed out at their feet." The reviewer of the 1901 Salon, Emile Molinier, also mentions the vitrine of which four very elongated rampant serpents of crystal, their throats open, held the corners: "the vitrine itself is a real find." The Gulbenkian display is certainly not as lavish; it is quite sober and underplayed in order to afford the jewelery its full impact. And the emotional impact it creates is positively overwhelming.

The incredible tridimensionality of the pieces, effaced by photographic reproductions, stands out here very powerfully. (Around 1880 Lalique, in his spare time, studied sculpture with Lequien.) His aim (I was about to say effort, but it sounds rather unfit for the apparently totally effortless, smooth-flowing quality of Lalique's touch, by which each line, color, stone, chisel's or hammer's decision seem to follow one another in logical sequence) at plasticity is particularly apparent in pendants with kissing pairs, where the two heads are always superimposed and the man's projects in full relief upon the woman's.

One kissing pair pendant (807) is of rock crystal: she, engraved on the back, he, modeled in full relief on the front. The woman's

Corsage Ornament, enameled gold, 21x14cm (804)

All photos courtesy of the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation Museum



Left: *Pendant*, rock crystal, enamel and gold, 48x6cm (807)

Center: *Diadem*, ivory, horn and a topaz, 16cm h (801)

Right: *Pendant*, enameled gold and an opal, 65x9cm (795)

face radiates a touching luminosity. The rock crystal plaque is encased in a gold frame of triangular shape. Dashes of gold connect the two frames. Full tridimensionality is reached in a hair ornament-comb of 1898 (801) showing three side-by-side views of an approximately full-size orchid (front view flanked by two side views). The mastery of the technique and the material employed (horn, ivory and topaz) perfectly recreates the cold sensuality of the flower.

A very interesting example of Lalique's almost "serial" description is a bracelet (776) composed of five chiseled rectangular gold compartments ending in claw-like settings. Owls, carved in roseate glass, appear in three of the compartments: one in the first, one in the third flanked by a pine cone, two in the fourth, with one in much bigger relief than the other. The second compartment, but for vegetation, is empty as a moment of suspence, a pause in a musical score. The fifth holds only two pine cones, in the same relative positions as those of the two owls in the preceding compartment, on an enameled background which fades into a much lighter tonality than the rest, thus creating a feeling of relative distance and depth. All the owls are perched on the same pine branch, which runs from one end of the bracelet to the other. The compartments are also adorned with a continuous flower motif in enamel on chiseled gold and plique-à-jour enamel. The blue plique-à-jour and 10 moonstones add a soft transparency to the piece as if the five scenes were seen in sequence from the same window. (The original drawing shows six compartments but the executed piece tightens the image into a terser experience.)

Lalique was constantly preoccupied with the search for new techniques, materials and media. He experimented and worked in all smithing techniques, at times taking them beyond their customary application (he cast one piece of glass with the lost-wax method), explored other fields, gathering new experiences (he was the first in modern times to use embroidery techniques on metal) and was not afraid to borrow whatever exciting results he saw in another artist's work, sure that he would unmistakingly make it his own.[4] He tried and succeeded to enamel on any material besides the conventional metals, which could withstand the heat of the kiln. He would spend some 1500 hours of persistent labor (particularly researching the varying degrees of expansion under heat of different materials and enamels), sure that eventually it would lead to positive results. The outcome of such laborious experimentation and research evidence virtually no effort in the finished piece. His work is immediate and spontaneous. His masterly "beforehand" knowledge dominates techniques, materials and media, old and new, and they seem to follow the will of his hand. Effortlessly, he led the public to accept his drastic break from past tradition. He fashioned a revolutionary style which he bent to the dictates of his fantasy and was immediately hailed as an innovator. He transformed customary jewelery, changed its dimensions, colors, character. The Renaissance had created individual art jewelery. René Lalique recreated art jewelery.

The dimensions of some of his pieces are startling. The well-known dragon fly pectoral measures 23 cm. in height and 26.6 cm. in width. The above-mentioned orchid-hair-ornament is 17.8 cm. by 16 cm. A corsage pin representing a knot of nine serpents is 21 cm. high and 14 cm. wide. Such dimensions must, in fact, have startled some of his viewers. Emile Molinier, reviewing the 1901 Salon, timidly asserts: "Much too many have thought that the bizarre aspect in Lalique's work is all. They are mistaken. If such an aspect does exist it is far from being the prime element of his talent. I am well aware of having earlier reproached Lalique for creating at times jewels impossible to wear, uncomfortable or beyond the human scale; consequently, pieces which from birth were doomed to become show pieces, dead objects one hundred per cent. What I reproached him for, although quite softly considering his immense talent, is, anyway, a fault now much less apparent." Another reviewer, Gustave Geffroy, says: "They are not always jewels to be worn, at times they are objects to keep in a coffer or in a showcase." The reason behind these oversized pieces has been attributed to the fact that between 1891 and 1894 Lalique made an important group of jewels for Sarah Bernhardt, who wore them in her roles as Iseyl, Gismonda and Théodora, and for Madame Bartet as Bérénice, Queen of Palestine. These included dia-

Bracelet, crystal, gold and enamel, 5x20cm (776)

dems, collars, belts of large size and ornate decoration, since they were to be seen from a distance.

From this experience of working with theatrical jewelery might also stem Lalique's revolutionary use of so called "vulgar," inexpensive material and semiprecious stones. He managed to give dignity back to a variety of materials which for a long time had been slighted, forgotten. In addition to gold and silver, he used iron, aluminum (at the end of the 19th century aluminum was still considered a precious metal), brass, copper, glass paste, glass, silex, chrysoprase, mother-of-pearl, ivory and horn. He brought back to life stones which were no longer in use, as they were not rare and of very little intrinsic value (he even used reddish pebbles from common garden gravel), but which under his hand became precious.

It is well know how he rehabilitated horn after the long triumph of tortoise shell. In the Salon of 1896 he exhibited a bracelet entirely of horn, unique since it was the first time this material had been used in any except barbarian jewelery. Horn, solid and simple, assumes in Lalique's work, particularly in bas-relief, tonalities at times ash-grey, at other times very pleasingly warm. And, properly used, it proves to combine beautifully with gold, enamel and glass.

Concerned with beauty and not monetary value, Lalique would choose a stone for its color, esthetic appeal or representational quality. For example, a pendant (795) depicts two peacocks facing each other in profile: in the center, between the converging lines of the heads and the diverging lines of the tails, there stands an enormous opal around which two blue enameled eagles hide amid pine branches of gold.

In regard to the use of a particular stone for the quality of its substance and as required by the effect it has to produce in a specific setting, in a specific piece, the example of the already mentioned comb in the shape of three orchids, where the small topaz is evidently a drop of dew, is especially significant.

Lalique rebelled against the abuse of diamonds and brilliants and would use them mostly for accents of light or for framing a piece. Often he would prefer baroque pearls to the customary round ones. The jewel was primarily conceived from an artistic point of view of form and color. This revolutionary concept had to be sanctioned by an order of the *Chambre Syndicale de la Bijouterie de Paris* of July 6, 1900, by which the use of precious stones or materials, side by side with semiprecious or common stones and materials, was officially allowed for the first time.

Technical perfection was not the aim but the natural foundation upon which Lalique would unfold his lyrical vision. Contemporary reviewers describe the pieces as if they were paintings. And, in fact, some of them are paintings or sculptures to be worn. He painted ivory with watercolors and a miniaturist's care. He became very involved with enamel around 1890 as he established his own atelier in rue Therése in Paris. Towards 1900, he showed a tendency to replace his use of opals with enameled accents. Colors are placed in such a way that they do not mingle but relate by strong contrasts and subtle associations, daringly and yet with restraint. Blue and purple next to green appears to be the most prevalent color association, becoming increasingly greyish in tonality. Towards 1904, his palette shows an almost monochromatic tendency, a very subdued gamut of greys and browns (for instance; bluish black and yellowish grey). The counterpart in jewelery of Paul Verlaine's verses: ". . . nothing more dear than the grey song / Where the Undefined and Exact combine / . . . As we desire mostly still the Nuance, / No colour, nothing but the nuance"[5] is a pin of 1904 (not in the Gulbenkian collection) depicting a satin-pod plant of prevalently silver-grey mother-of-pearl combined with pale yellow gold, enameled brown in places, and topaz. ". . . a bundle of satin-pods . . . with the cold and dead luminescence of its blank medals," thus Edmond Jaloux described the satin-pod plant.[6] It is known that Lalique read extensively and that contemporary poetry provided the inspiration for many of the artist's pieces. It is interesting to speculate that he might have known Jaloux's work and this passage.

Sensitive and lyrical landscapes appear on large pieces in enamel, either plique-à-jour or over chiseled gold. A collar of ca. 1898 (742) is enameled with a landscape of tree trunks screening a lake. The trees are of chiseled gold with green enameled leaves, the water is of enameled gold, chiseled in a wavy pattern, pur-

plish pink in the center and turning green with orange highlights at both extremities. Opals and brilliants scattered on the ground provide glistening water-drop effects.

Lalique's landscapes seem to center mostly around water, either as a lake, a river or crystalized into snow. Around 1896 he created a large pendant for the Russian nobility (not in the Gulbenkian collection) of gold, white and blue enamel and with a sapphire drop. It represents a winter landscape: a pine forest on the edge of a pond. A snow-capped fir, its branches weighted down by snow, envelopes half of the lower part of the drop-shaded pendant in a diagonal fold, thus creating the impression of a heavy curtain behind which the pond recedes in perspective. The staggered pointed ends of the branches break the line of the frame. Then, from underneath them, a single ivy twig emerges, which encircles the rest of the frame in a continuous line and ends with a leaf at the top. Into the narrower upper part of the pendant, only bare tree trunks extend and a sky, which is actually the air space defining them. Here the frame breaks up and becomes part of the scene, while the scene is the pretext for the frame.

The frames of the pieces are always conceived as an integral part of the content. Lalique believed that each piece of jewelery must be an entity. If the decorative element was a flower or a plant, he would take care to have the functional element—be it the teeth of a comb or the frame of a pin or pendant—coincide with the anatomy of the plant/flower motif.

Lalique studied very attentively the history of decoration and ornamentation. Traces of past formal styles, classical, Etruscan, Egyptian, Byzantine, Renaissance and Japanese are detectable as part of his cultural heritage. Before starting on a piece he would always draw and paint a precise rendition of the jewel to be. Sometimes variations occurred during the execution. In general, one notices more abandonment in the design of the finished piece, which tends to assimilate better the essence of the subject represented.

Below left: *Brooch*, crystal, silver and a baroque pearl, 10cm h (751)

Below right: *Pendant and Chain*, ivory, translucent enamel and a pearl, 11.5cm h (755)

Right: *Panel from a Collar*, gold, enamel, opals and diamonds, 5x12.5cm (742)

Lalique surrounded himself at home with plants, and during his walks in the country he meticulously observed flowers, plants and animals in all phases of their growth. As Pol Neveu says: "For Lalique nothing is worthless and despicable in the spectacle of things. He seems to have strolled through fields, scrutinized with an attentive eye the streams of the Saintonge region so as to question its aquatic life. He studied the germination, blooming, diseases and death of plants, the habits and movements of birds and insects. . . . He has a knowledge of rural life which he acquired in the gardens, woods and in his atelier. As a sensible Champenois he has cherished animals and plants with a touching but informed faith." Gustave Geffroy adds: "He discerned amid the beauty of the plant and animal world a delicate grace which does not exclude strength, a tender, discreet, inconspicuous, cold harmony which does not exclude richness." He knew how to relate to the sensation of a blooming or withering flower, its fragile youth, its withering decline, its nervous crumpling up, its terminal transparent thinness under which its contracted fibers emerge like tendons. He succeeded in capturing its individuality, character, its essence. Some of the leaves are pointed and fine, others large and heavy and others, still, light and brittle. Above all in his combs and diadems, Lalique gave us superb portraits of flowers.

Lalique seemed to favor particularly and to glorify the pine cone. Either chiseled in gold or carved out of chrysoprase or chrysolite or enameled green or blue over chiseled gold, it provided the frame for stones or figures of ivory or other materials in pendants and brooches. When the artist built his house and atelier in Cours-la-Reine in Paris in 1902, "the doorway was ornamented with a sculptured pine tree and wrought iron balcony of pine branches."[7]

Lalique's imagery derived from the figurative vocabulary of Art Nouveau. His animals were chosen for the charm of their line (swans, serpents) or for the brilliance of their color (peacocks, butterflies, beetles). He restored formal beauty to ugly or repulsive beasts (bats, serpents). On a comb of 1900 (not in the Gulbenkian collection), slow and funereal bats play around pale stars represented by moonstones. From a twisted and contracted knot of serpents, in a pectoral of ca. 1898 (804), rise nine gaping heads which spread out fanwise. Each mouth used to spit long rosaries of baroque pearls. No longer. "One cannot describe the horror and beauty of this living mass. The sensation of power that these beasts exude, their true-to-nature metallic colour (silver gilt Champlevé enamel [t.n.]), the mastery of their anatomy dispel any feeling of repulsion" explains Pol Neveu as he sees them at the 1900 Salon.

Lalique was born in the same region as La Fontaine, but of the fabulist's vision of the animal kingdom he retained only the lyrical aspects; he rejected the didactic or anecdotal. There is no message, only formal beauty or a symbol. The artist linked the female figure with Nature, whether in the guise of a swan, a lotus flower, a dragonfly or a snake—the Flower-Woman, Medusa, Leda or Psyche. At times she appears as the "Fleur du Mal," tenebrous lily, a sphinx-like creature or she is treated simply as an object of eroticism; Femme Fatale or "Gay Paris." At other times she is a serene, angelic, ethereal being. She echoes the Woman-Symbol of Art Nouveau Symbolist painters, from Gustave Moreau's sensuous Salomés, the Woman-Sibyl, Sphinx, Panther of Fernand Khnopff to the pale and wan figures of Edward Burne-Jones. But while for these painters the Women-Symbols were one of the formal expressions of the esoteric cults they professed (for instance, the bizarre theory of the "Rose-Croix"), for Lalique they were only the rendition of a particular form that he would draw from the vocabulary of the period only for its plastic value. This difference is particularly evident when comparing Lalique's and Khnopff's Women-Symbols. Lalique, through his direct formal approach always reaches the core of "the sublime," while Khnopff's approach is burdened by his esoteric esthetics which weigh down and stifle the formal impact of his images.

In one example, a pendant (751) represents a medusalike head with a face carved from greyish crystal and geometric hair surmounted by poppies of grey silver. The entire piece seems colorless (again remindful of Verlaine's verses: "No colour, nothing but the nuance"). The intense, inward expression of the face is of a removed sadness. It is a cold, forbidding creature not of this world, a vision of opium. This latter trait is emphasized by the silver-grey poppies, their narcotic quality opening the door to a world beyond, to evasion into the unconscious, into dream, oblivion. Or could she be Rimbaud's Ophelia: "On the black, calm water . . . like a lily Ophelia, white and alone. . ."?[8] A baroque pearl hangs from its frame.

"I will sing your eyes of gold,
of shadows pure,
then the Lethe of your breast,
then the cold
Styx of your hair."[9]

A very open eroticism, with no symbolic implications, pervades other pieces. One, a pendant of 1898 (755), shows a perfect female figure carved in ivory and almost wrapped in leafage of plique-à-jour enamel from which hangs a baroque pearl. She is caught in a gay dance posture holding the edges of an oversize leaf, as if they were the edges of a cloak, and exposing her nudity. Two delicate gold branches with leaves of bluish-grey enamel hang down and cross over her, echoing the curve of her body as if in a prudish pretense at disguising her nudity. This was one of the first pieces to represent the female nude which Lalique introduced earlier in 1875. In contrast to this erotic representation are some brooches with delicate, almost Pre-Raphaelite, female figures in idyllic settings, picking flowers, holding garlands or depicted as winged angels.

Lalique's art symbolizes nature and life. A symbol is, in other words, a synthesis. André Beaunier remarks, "For Lalique stylisation is not an afterthought, it is neither capricious nor arbitrary: one can say that it is, in a way, the necessary result of the vigorous effort of a comprehensive and unifying vision. Such stylisation is, in fact, the synthesis of all the realities constituting a particular entity. Lalique isolates and points out the expressive traits of the object he is looking at; he liberates the essential from confusion: his flower is typical and individual at the same time. . . . At times he leaves to the flower its life resemblance, other times he fixes it in a purely ornamental attitude." In one example, on a pectoral of horn and gold enamel (787), two grasshoppers face each other on a blossoming hawthorn branch.[10] The composition of silver, pale green and brown tones exquisitely captures the synthesis of the insect's shapes. Lalique submits realism to a series of formal processes which, advancing from a static objective rendition to active stylization, generate a movement in the piece.

In another example, a rectangular pin (743) shows a somber and serene female profile, typical of Lalique, carved in green chrysoprase. A stream of chiseled gold hair is encircled and held tight by a purple ribbon. As it departs from the realistically treated central element (the profile), the ribbon becomes purely decorative like the feathers in the peacock's pendant. The stems of three purplish flowers also emerge from behind the profile and flow in a continuous movement. The sinuous lines undulate, recoil, go under and reemerge as water currents in a stream. One of the stems follows the line of the eyebrows, continues in the hair, moves upward under the ribbon and picks up again in the stem of the flower on the opposite side of the head. The profile is made more vibrant by the forward tension of the neck jutting out of an horizontal leaf at the bottom. It acquires a vital force in contrast to the flowers, bent down, flattened against the frame with the outline of an Egyptian lotus flower. The flower, thus stylized, becomes pure decoration, subdued, static. The hair, as it emerges from the ribbon, opens actively like a blossom.

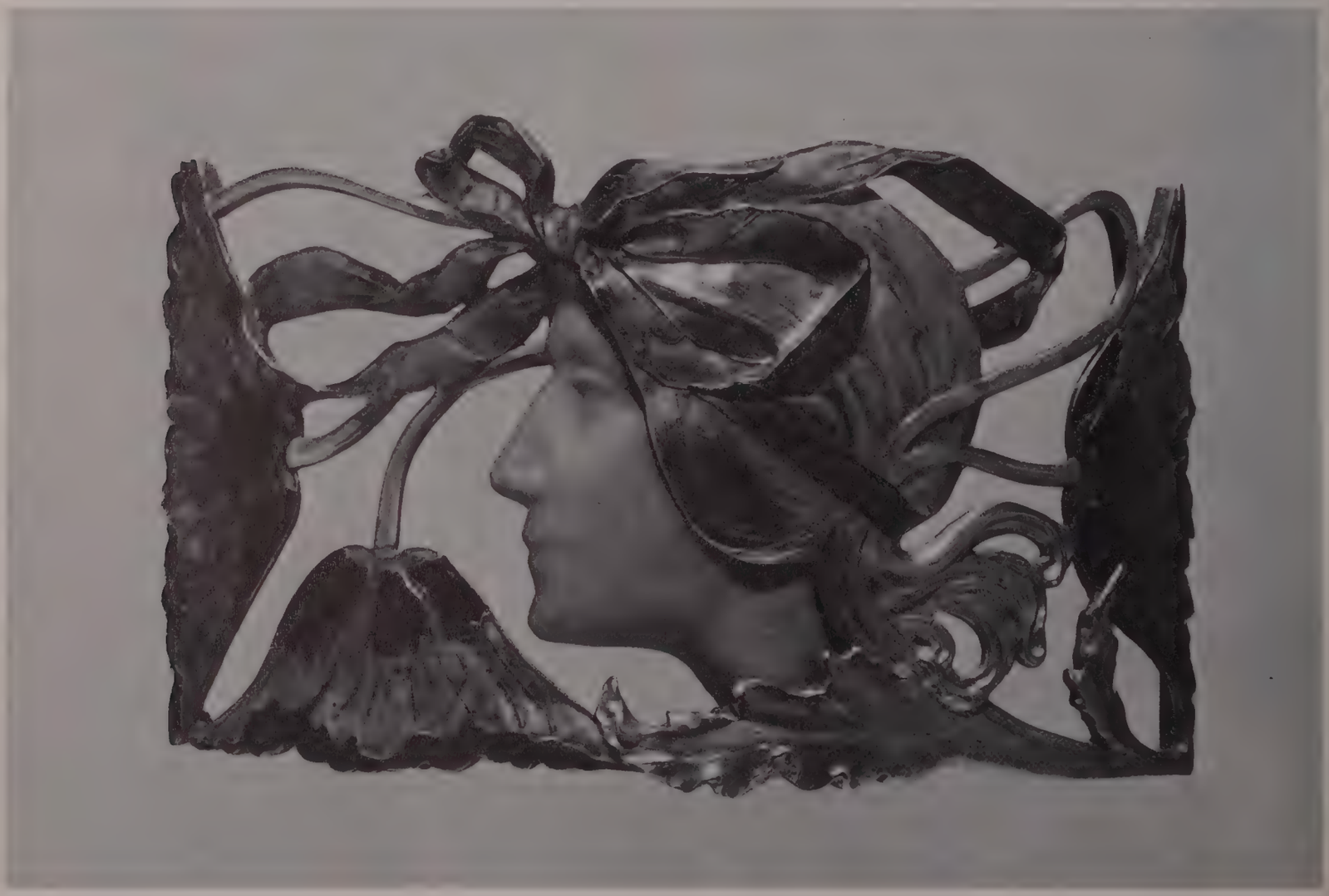
Lalique played on contrasts: abstraction next to literal objects, ornamental and grotesque elements juxtaposed to literary, mythological, allegorical and symbolic themes. The human figure becomes part of an insect or a plant: metamorphosis engendering evolution. Lalique constantly renewed himself. He never stuck to a formula; as soon as he had exhausted a creative idea he would search for another. While his imitators continued to make early "Laliques," he was searching and finding other creative solutions.

After 1905, Lalique's jewelery shows a more geometical trend and a tendency towards straight lines in anticipation of the Art Deco style. One example in the Gulbenkian collection is a stunning pectoral (813) in the shape of a slightly curved, horizontal rose branch. A long, pale amethyst is held between this branch and a second horizontal element in the shape of an elongated thorn. The stone forms the center of the piece. On each side, four stems descend from the branch, their direction becoming progressively more vertical towards the center. Each stem bears at its end a delicate rose of pink crystal, while the branches and leaves are of very pale green enamel.

One walking stick handle (841) is the only example in the Gulbenkian collection of Lalique's interest in this area of jewelery (he also made exquisite watches). A cloudlike swirl of smoky pink glass holds three figures of gold.

Here, as in each of the other problems posed by a particular piece of jewelery, Lalique's solution shows a variety of aspects and decorative resources which is constantly intriguing and, at the same time, irresistibly enticing.

Vittoria Cozzi-Olivetti is an Italian metalsmith living in the United States. In the fall of 1979 he studied the work of Lalique at the Gulbenkian Foundation Museum and Library in Lisbon, Portugal.



Notes

All numbers in parenthesis refer to the numbers in the display cases of the Gulbenkian Museum, Lisbon, Portugal.

All quotations from the reviews by contemporaries of Lalique are taken from *Art et Décoration:*
Pol Neveu, "René Lalique," T. VIII, Nov. 1900, pp. 129–136; Emile Molinier, "Les Object d'Art au Salon," T. X. Jul.–Dec. 1901, pp. 21–32; André Beaunier, "Les Bijoux de Lalique au Salon," T. XII, Jul.–Dec. 1902, pp. 33–39; Gustave Geffroy, "Des Bijoux. A propos de René Lalique." T. XVIII, Jul.–Dec. 1905, pp. 177–188.

1. Reprinted from the article by Ferreira Maria Teresa Gomes, "René Lalique at the Calouste Gulbenkian Museum, Lisbon," *Connoisseur,* London, Aug. 1971, (714), pp. 241–249.
2. Ibid.
3. Katharine Morrison McClinton, *"Lalique for Collectors,"* New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1975.
4. For some of his woven panels Lalique borrowed from Madame Dru-Robin, a textile artist, her techniques of using gold brocades appliqued on rough grey canvas and reembroidered with common hemp strings and threads of aged gold.
5. Paul Verlaine, *Art Poétique,* transl. Vittoria Cozzi-Olivetti.
6. Edmond Jaloux, *Jeune Homme au mascue,* transl. ibid.
7. Katharine Morrison McClinton, *op cit.*
8. Arthur Rimbaud, *Ophelia, White Phantom on the Long Black River,* transl. Vittoria Cozzi-Olivetti.
9. Paul Verlaine, *Sérénade,* transl. C. F. McIntyre.
10. Lalique must have seen a reproduction of the gold pendant of hornets from the necropolis at Chrysolakkos, Mycenae, (17th c. BC) in the Heraklion Museum, Crete. The insects are in the same position and similarly highly stylized; their limbs are treated not only as decorative but also as functional elements. The same motif appears in Lalique's necklace (799) which consists of couples of facing hornets whose legs hold pearls by the tip of the first phalange, then bend back and hold the gold ring which connects the pairs. In the Chrysolakkos pairs of hornets, the first phalange of the legs holds a gold disc. (Two other Lalique pieces in the Gulbenkian collection are remindful, as a source of inspiration, of two famous examples of the past: Lalique's pectoral of two knights engaged in combat (793)—cfr. the comb with a battlescene between infantry and cavalry from Solokha, Scythian, 5th-4th c. BC at the Hermitage in Leningrad; Lalique's bracelet (776) and necklace (811)–cfr. necklace of gold plaques, Rhodes, 7th c. BC in the British Museum, London.

Far left: *Panel from a Collar,* chrysoprase, gold and enameled gold, 5x9cm (743)

Left: *Pendant,* crystal, enameled gold and a pearl, 11.3x6.7cm (745)

CRAFTS: SECOND CLASS CITIZENS?

by Bruce Metcalf

The following is a modified version of a lecture given by Bruce Metcalf at the 1980 annual conference of the Society of North American Goldsmiths in Tucson, Arizona.

I'm supposed to talk about esthetics. I know a lot of you are thinking, "bor-ing!" and thinking how you'd much rather see some work instead of listening to all these words. I can't altogether blame you, for anybody who has tried to learn about modern-day esthetics—that is, art criticism—knows how dry and convoluted the subject can become. Picking up *Art Forum* magazine, most people immediately get the sense that the articles are all badly translated from German, very esoteric and obscure, and that the whole venture is simply not worth bothering with. So it's easy to believe that all esthetics are convoluted beyond comprehension, or at least not important enough to deal with. Actually, I tend to agree with anyone who thinks that.

But there is another side to the coin, a side where esthetics becomes important. To illustrate, let me tell you a story. I was visiting a gallery in Boston, the Harkus-Krakow Gallery on Newbury Street. They had paintings upstairs and a show of photographs by Joel Meyerowitz downstairs. I was listening to the gallery owner talk about photography as a different medium with a different vocabulary from painting or sculpture. She spoke of the difficulty that her customers had in dealing with the photographic image, because they were used to dealing with paintings and prints. Their definition of art was too limited, so they couldn't understand the photographs being a valid art form. Something needed to be explained to them. The gallery owner said that once she explained that photography was not the same as painting—that there were different, but important, ideas and attitudes operating—then the people became more receptive.

She was talking about how the work is understood. And that's the purpose of esthetics, to bring understanding to the work at hand. It's not just what the artists think and feel about their work, but also what is communicated to other people. For the gallery owner, it was important to get her customers to understand and sympathize with the photographs so they would feel like buying some of them. For that reason, she talked about the esthetics of photography. For her, understanding is a matter of survival.

As I listened to this lady, I thought, "Why don't we speak about the crafts as having distinctive ideas and attitudes that separate them from painting and sculpture?" The more I thought about it, the more sense it made. Crafts *can* be understood in a different way from painting and sculpture. That's what I'm talking about today.

Definition of Crafts

Before I continue, I should define what I mean by the term "crafts." I don't think there is a precise definition, but I will give you a broad, vague definition so that we have some kind of agreement as to what I'm talking about. I'm not asking you to believe me, but just to provisionally accept my definition for the purposes of this discussion.

Crafts are identified, first, with specific media and their techniques. When we speak of metalsmithing, we are talking about a certain material—metal—and the body of techniques that are used to work that material. Similarly, when we speak of glass, we are identifying both a material and a way of manipulating it—glassblowing.

We also define crafts in terms of function. Jewelry-making, for instance, names a functional context. Furniture-making names another. These functional areas have only

I recall a review of a Robert Arneson show a few years ago in which the reviewer said that the work was not intellectual enough and that it stank of the kitchen.

a rough overlapping with specific media. Jewelry is usually made out of metal in our culture, it is true, but you can also make jewelry out of feathers. Furniture is usually made out of wood, but it is also frequently made of iron or other metals. So, you see, these definitions are blurred, but they are still useful.

The first question I ask is this: how have the crafts been understood? Traditionally, the crafts have been a second-class citizen in the art world. To put it bluntly, there are a lot of people who think that a craft object cannot possibly be art. Obviously, most of us here don't believe this, but I'm talking about a world considerably larger and more influential than this group of metalsmiths. It's bigger and more influential than any body of craftsmen. Since I'm a metalsmith selling my work in a gallery, I have to deal very directly with this art world. Although you may think that you are immune to the judgements of gallery owners and collectors, of museum curators and art critics, it is their opinions that become conventional wisdom. These people have placed the crafts in a second-class-citizen status, and because of their power their view has pervaded the whole art world. It is through the opinions of these gallery owners, curators, critics and writers that most people understand us.

Fortunately, this position is eroding. There are a number of people who are agitating for equal status for the crafts, and they are meeting with some success. Nevertheless, they are fighting a traditional view that is centuries old and has become one of the basic assumptions in the art world. Do you doubt me?

Let me give you a couple quotes from reliable sources. Most of you probably remember H. W. Jansen's *History of Art*—the big gray book that's used for "Introduction to Art" courses in almost every art school in the country. If anybody speaks for conventional wisdom, Mr. Jansen does, because he had to be in the best taste and of the most careful conservatism to get his book so widely accepted. And this is what he has to say about the crafts. First he says, "Originality is what distinguishes art from craft." Then he says that the purpose of the applied arts (meaning crafts) is to "beautify the useful, an important and honorable purpose no doubt, but of a lesser order than art pure and simple." Nor is this attitude limited to historical work. I recall a review of a Robert Arneson show a few years ago in which the reviewer said that the work was not intellectual enough and that it stank of the kitchen. And Robert Arneson is about the biggest and best that the crafts world has to offer.

Obviously, there's some kind of gap here. There's some kind of drastic difference between the way you and I understand the crafts and the way these writers do. So, what is the source of this tremendous difference?

Crafts' Five Weaknesses

I think there are five major weaknesses that art critics and historians have perceived in the crafts. These writers act as permission-givers; in a sense it is these people who define the conventional wisdom about what constitutes art and what does not. So, when they perceive a weakness, it becomes a reason to withhold the designation of "art." In examining these weaknesses, we can understand why the crafts have been put on the art world's back burner for so long, and also how to answer their arguments.

First of all, there has always been a weak

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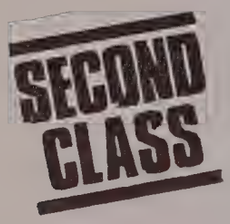

tradition of writing about the crafts. Art criticism in the Western world goes back to the Classical Greeks, and even before, and has remained a favorite topic for intellectuals ever since. The art academies, and artist-philosophers like Leonardo Da Vinci, revived this tradition of writing about painting and sculpture and regrettably left the crafts out of their deliberations altogether. The only craft organizations that were analogous to the art academies were the guilds, and they concerned themselves with regulating the market rather than with philosophy and esthetics. There have been very few craftsmen-philosophers until comparatively recently. Thus, with only a few exceptions, there has been no tradition of writing about the crafts. Since writers respect the history of ideas, this vacuum of writing about the esthetics of crafts seemed to suggest that there was nothing important going on. This is one of the prejudices that affects us even today.

Second, the crafts have traditionally been preoccupied with function. This is not to say that art critics find all functional objects to be inferior art—architecture, for instance, has been regarded as a major art form since the Renaissance. The craft objects that were made in the Bauhaus are generally regarded as art, but only to the extent that those pots and rugs and teapots shared in the conceptual program that the Bauhaus was promoting. To conventional wisdom, then, a functional work can only be art when it serves as a framework to apply some theory to. Those craft objects that simply operate in the functional traditions of crafts—your everyday teapot, for example—have not been given permission to be art because they don't illustrate any theory about modern art.

Third, the crafts have been denied respect because they traditionally make use of ornamentation and eclecticism. To understand why writers and historians think this is bad, you have to look at the central motivations, and some of the illusions, of the modernist movements. After the turn of the century, the modernist attitude was that decoration was decadent and artistically irresponsible. They were referring in particular to hack architecture and design of the period, where a house or a lamp or anything else became a surface on which to affix a stunning mish-mash of ornaments in all manner of historical styles. (Imagine a typically overdone Victorian house.) In reaction to this kind of design, the modernists decided that any ornamentation, and any use of a previous style, was suspect. They tended to prefer straightforward clean design, where the structure of the work was also the image that it presented. The phrase "form follows function" expresses this idea most clearly—and that is why modern art has been so favorable to industrial design. Today in the Museum of Modern Art in New York you can see more propellers and automobiles and the like than craft objects.

For a time, ornamentation was even equated with criminal tendencies. Adolph Loos, a modernist architect, wrote in 1908 that most criminals were tatooed, and that the earliest impulses to art were bathroom grafitti. Since both tatooing and grafitti are degenerate and ornamental, he reasoned, the goal of highly evolved culture is to eliminate all ornamentation from all objects. It's a wonderful leap of logic, and I don't know how many people believe him, but it's clear that architecture and industrial design have gone through the last 50 years as if what old Adolph said was true.

The fourth weakness that people have perceived in the crafts is what I call the "five-year-lag-syndrome." It has often been remarked that a current idiom will show up in the crafts about five years after it appears in painting or sculpture. Of course, there have been borrowings from painting and sculpture into crafts disciplines ever since the three were split apart in the early Renaissance. But what irks critics today is the obviousness of the influence and the tardiness in picking up the style. I recall seeing a quilt done in 1974 that was a series of silkscreenlike images of people, even including one of Marilyn Monroe. It was clearly derived from the serial silkscreens by Andy Warhol. He did Marilyn in 1962, which makes a 12 year time-lag in this case.

Last, and most significant, is the weakness that critics and historians perceive in craftsmen's lack of an intellectual approach. Now, you have to bear in mind that the dominant definition of art in the 20th century holds that art is an intellectual process. Art is judged (and understood) largely by how it relates and contributes to the continuing history of art ideas. Ever since Impressionism, painting and sculpture are often seen to be the only arena wherein art issues are developed. The major directions of 20th-century art—the move toward abstraction, the idea of constructivism, the later move toward rigorous reductionism and a host of other ideas—have been developed in painting and sculpture. Crafts have adopted most of these ideas five to ten years later, as I mentioned, much too late to really claim credit for their development. As a consequence, most critics

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and writers, and most of the rest of the art world, think that the crafts are completely out of it intellectually. In their view, craftsmen have not done any truly substantial art simply because they have not participated in the ongoing development of important artistic concepts and issues. Craftsmen are not, as the reviewer said, intellectual enough. Or, so it seems on the surface.

Ultimately, the acceptance of these weaknesses depends on your value system, on what you hold to be good and what you think to be bad. I think there is a lot of truth in these criticisms, but I also believe there is another side to the story that has not been considered until recently.

Crafts' Language and Tradition

I propose that there is a separate tradition of ideas and attitudes in the crafts. There is a separate language, and in some cases a separate value system, that often has no parallel in painting or sculpture. This tradition, this language, is just as old and honorable as the tradition of painting and sculpture. Its newest manifestations have been just as intelligent and radical as the newest developments in any of the fine arts contexts. These traditions of ideas and attitudes are the real subject of my talk.

I have divided the language of crafts into four catagories: attitude, identity, format, and value systems. Each one relates to the others, and as a group, I think they can serve as a beginning and a foundation, for the making of a genuine crafts esthetic.

Attitude

First, I want to talk about attitude. As I pointed out, the crafts have not been associated with intellectual processes in art. But there is a reason for this. In general, analysis and categorization—which are the cornerstones of intellectual process—are not seen by most craftsmen as having positive value in and of themselves. This distrust of intellectual process goes back to the roots of philosophy in every developed culture in the world. You can place almost everyone in one of two philosophical camps: the Classicists, who believe in the truth and power of analysis and categorization, and the Romantics, who believe in the truth and power of intuition and emotion. The Romantic attitude, I feel dominates the crafts.

The Romantic attitude is basically nonintellectual and stands opposite Classical philosophy. People in the Romantic camp are not interested in naming, categorizing or analyzing, but rather in experience itself. The nonintellectual tradition is as old as human thought: it is associated with emotion, with humor and fantasy, with intuition and with mysticism. These are all ways of thinking that don't submit to logic and rationality, and that is why I call them nonintellectual. It is this irrational aspect to much of the crafts that has alienated critics, who are committed to rational analysis and literacy, and who are also committed to the role of permission-givers in the art world. Crafts that are nonintellectual in attitude are not given permission to be art.

I suggest, however, that the attitude is the esthetic. The Romantic attutude favors experience over analysis, it favors feelings and fun and going with the flow. This attitude generates and informs the great majority of craft objects, and I'm sure most of you would agree. Some of the most direct and obvious examples of how the Romantic attitude colors craftwork was in the Funk movement in ceramics. Robert Arneson's "Typewriter" (1966) is typical of the whole movement's approach: a crudely made clay typewriter has fingers with red nails instead of keys. On the first viewing, it is a joke, a humorous and appropriate contrast of images. "Typewriter" is also a dirty alternative to the antiseptic quality that dominated Pop Art at the time, and perhaps also an attack on the seriousness of fine art. In any case, the Romantic attitude clearly informs the work and becomes necessary to both the making and the appreciation of a work like "Typewriter." In this sense, I suggest, the attitude becomes the esthetic.

This nonintellectual mode of thought is similar to Eastern philosophies that are specifically intended to avoid abstractions and deal only with real phenomena, like Zen or Taoism. Zen, in turn, developed an esthetic view related to crafts. The special area that men of Zen concentrated on was the *cha-no-yu,* the tea ceremony.

The Japanese tea ceremony was developed in the 13th century by modifying earlier Chinese monastic ceremonies. To paraphrase D. T. Suzuki, the art of tea is intended to establish a Buddhaland in a small group by fostering tranquility and gentleness of spirit. Not only the ceremony, but also the tea utensils and the environment are supposed to encourage this same quietness of mind. From the tea ceremony there emerged a way of evaluating the tea utensils, and, in fact, all art. The preference was for objects that were unpretentious and homely. The qualities of effortlessness, imperfection and unfashionableness were elevated to the highest esthetic level, because these qualities were held to

The crafts, and craftsmakers, are consistently motivated by simple human needs, needs that are not widely recognized by scientists and intellectuals because they are so hard to qualify and talk about.

represent the authenic Zen understanding. The most famous teabowl in Japan started its life as a Korean farmer's rice bowl. It is rough and unassuming, and because it had these qualities rather than careful esthetic consideration, it has been elevated to its present status.

The teachings of Zen claim that enlightenment comes not through analysis and categorization, but through meditation and the simple process of merely paying attention. I believe that Zen is a very sophisticated and very disciplined version of the Romantic mode of thought. The way of seeing and the artistic sensibility that came from the way of tea was a direct descendent of Zen thought. There is an esthetic approach in the way of tea that is highly refined and that sprang from a nonintellectual way of looking at things.

In the 1920s, a Japanese writer named Soetsu Yanagi started looking at indigenous Japanese crafts and discovered for himself the esthetics of the tea ceremony. He was joined by several potters who shared his enthusiasm, notably Bernard Leach and Shoji Hamada. These three revolutionized studio ceramics by their insistence on unpretentiousness and naturalness in their pots. Their esthetic passed through England to America, where it remains a considerable force in crafts today. The writings of Leach and Yanagi are probably the most widely accepted esthetic theories to have come from the nonintellectual tradition.

The tea sensibility is related to the way craftsmen work. The fact that you get to work with your hands is of central importance to many craftsworkers. In manipulating a material and seeing what it will do, there occurs a mutual communication between object and maker. The material itself begins to suggest alternatives by the way it moves and responds to the actions of the maker. This highly intuitive process of making decisions at the moment of making the object is very similar to improvising music. There is a kind of problem-solving, not by extensive analysis, but by experiencing the problems and allowing the solutions to arise spontaneously. This unpremeditated approach is highly favored by the Zen-influenced potters. The pot assumes form as it is being thrown. The process is immediate and direct and almost like meditation.

It's also important that the process of making gives tremendous satisfaction to many craftsmen. They put a positive value on how the work changes their psyche rather than on how the work meets critical standards. The work is good because it gives a real and immediate emotional reward, not because somebody else thinks it's good. The work itself is what is interesting, and what sustains the maker. This kind of craftsman tends to regard the objects he or she makes as a by-product of a much more important process of making. Again, this is a Romantic preference for experience over analysis. The preoccupation is with the inward, emotional state of the artist and with how the work can change that state. The power of this approach is demonstrated by the number of people who leave lucrative professions and start working with their hands at a craft. I know an advertising executive who became a potter and a concrete-plant operator who became a furniture-maker. I'm sure that many of the members of SNAG became metalsmiths because they recognized their professional lives were not nearly as satisfying as their artistic lives.

Now, this emphasis on personal satisfaction sounds a little like the "Me-decade" ethic, but the Romantic attitude goes further than that. The crafts, and craftsmakers, are consistently motivated by simple human needs, needs that are not widely recognized by scientists and intellectuals because they are so hard to quantify and talk about. But a nonintellectual thinker can recognize these needs because he or she can feel them, and doesn't question their reality. I'm talking about simple human needs, like the necessity for complexity, the need for imaginative and satisfying work or the need for personal identity along with a sense of belonging. People need tradition, they need to have fun and be capricious from time to time and they need to take delight in the things they see and touch. These are simple things and they are widely neglected, because no bureaucrat or scientist can tell precisely what they are. The Romantic thinker recognizes these needs because they are felt and not analyzed.

I believe that craftsmen have always gone about answering these needs, often without claiming to. But you can understand how the patterns on a Navajo rug satisfies the need for visual complexity, or how jewelry satisfies the need for personal identity or how a piece of Funk ceramics satisfies the need for capriciousness. Here is an expressionism that is motivated not by theoretical considerations, but by the desire to give something simple but absolutely necessary to people.

The nonintellectual tradition of answering human needs is evidenced in the free use of two things that modernist art theory has held in the lowest esteem for 50 years: ornamentation and eclecticism. You recall that this is

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SECOND CLASS

one of the major weaknesses that critics have seen in the crafts.

Ornamentation and Eclecticism

You all know what ornamentation is. I believe that ornamentation has always been used to satisfy the human need for complexity and contrast. It is proven in the colorful clothes and festooned jewelry of rural people in harsh environments all over the world. Here, ornamentation serves as a relief from the tedious, barren surroundings. This is probably why so many college dormitory rooms are heavily decorated.

Ornament also makes objects delightful—and fascinating. The decoration is intended to sustain people during the course of ordinary life, to give richness and a humane scale where there might otherwise be only blandness.

Of course, ornaments have more formal purposes. Decorating an object introduces a foil and contrast to the structure or body. Ornaments become visual stops and a means to introduce color and texture to an object, and they can also become a vehicle for symbolic content.

The free use of eclecticism is another earmark of the Romantic attitude. I haven't defined the term so far, and I figure that some of you are in the dark. Eclecticism is a way of designing where all kinds of historical styles are used as sources, and what seems to be the best parts of each style are used for designing the object in question. As I said before, in the art world eclecticism became the moral equivalent of murdering your baby sister. Now, another aspect of the Romantic mode of thought is that it tends toward rebelliousness and iconoclasm, and I think that eclecticism has been used in the crafts in a very rebellious way. There has been an intuitive irreverence toward the established fine art morality of the day, and that irreverence has appeared in the form of eclecticism. Instead of using sources that are approved and certified, craftsmen have tended to prefer sources and approaches that go against the grain. This has been a conscious rejection of the current value systems in painting and sculpture, and, as such, bears a resemblance to any anti-high-art-taste movement. That's one reason why Art Nouveau and Art Deco have been such pervasive influences among craftsmen in the last decade.

Actually, eclecticism is a time-honored device, and has been well accepted in the art world when done with sufficient taste and a lot of intellectual-sounding justification. Picasso, in *Les Demoiselles d'Avignon,* selected certain aspects of African art and grafted them onto Cubism. What happened there, and what happens in most examples of eclecticism, is a transformation of an older style in its meeting with new contexts, techniques and ideas. By shifting the context of the styles being used, all sorts of poetic and possibly shocking associations can be made. Picasso used African art to challenge his viewers' preconceived notions about art, and I believe that many craftsmen have a similar motive.

Eclecticism was also used as an antidote to the blankness of reductionist art in the 60s and 70s. As painters and sculptors went through the intellectual process of reducing their art to the essential minimum, huge numbers of romantically inclined craftsmen were bored stiff. By taking influences from within and without the body of art history, craftsmen created a kind of opposite to minimalism and conceptualism. Freely mixing all these influences, they not only rejected the reductionist trend, but they created a more energetic and delightful art, that was much more satisfying to people with nonintellectual sympathies.

Identity

The second aspect of the language of craft that I want to talk about is identity. When a person says, "I am a metalsmith," or "I am a woordworker," they are suggesting that there are aspects of what they do that are different from, say, a painter or a sculptor. Of course, some things do not change from one discipline in the visual arts to the next—color is the same for painters as it is for potters, and composition works the same way whether you are a bookbinder or a printmaker. These formal considerations cross all boundaries in the visual arts, as do many of the more philosophical elements. A symbol is a symbol, for instance, whether it is made of oil paint or clay. All craftsmen have much in common with all the concerns of painters and sculptors.

But I'm interested here in what is not held in common. So, when I say, "I'm a metalsmith," what do I include that doesn't have to do with other artistic disciplines?

First of all, craftsmen have a different history. The history of crafts goes back to the beginnings of culture, and it contains an incredibly rich and varied body of work and ideas. Each group within the crafts contains its own subhistory—the story of how each culture used the material and techniques of that discipline. And this history is of great

During the 70s I think there was a certain amount of art-guilt on the part of some craftsmen.

importance to all of us, because it can give us an identity, a historical context, that is not shared by painting and sculpture. The more that you know about the history of crafts and the history of your own discipline, the more connected you feel with the ongoing process of the human condition—at least, I'm beginning to feel that way. I take pleasure in associating my work with the metalsmithing of past civilizations, for it gives me a sense of belonging to a process that is much larger, and vastly more important, than I am.

When I claim to be a metalsmith, I also imply a certain loyalty to my tools, processes and materials. I suspect that painters and sculptors feel much the same way about their tools and materials, but my commitment is to metalsmithing, and that makes me different from them. I love my tools; I take great pleasure from looking at my hammers and stakes, or my drawers full of hand tools. I also love the processes—the long hours spent at the bench, carefully assembling and refining tiny objects. It is a way of working that I find very satisfying, and this connects back to what I was saying about the Romantic preference for dealing with the internal experience rather than external standards.

If identity describes an internal state of what it's like to be a craftworker, then format describes an external condition. By being craftsmen, we are provided with certain formats, which we accept or reject as we please.

Format

The broadest format provided by crafts is the object. Since crafts, pretty much by definition, involve the manipulation of materials in order to make an object, we are all pretty much stuck being object-makers. There are exceptions, and during the 70s many of these exceptions were explored. I think there was a certain amount of art-guilt on the part of some craftsmen; they felt that they should follow along with the reductionist developments occuring in the mainstream art scene. As art became increasingly conceptual and finally abandoned the object altogether, some craftsmen also abandoned the object. So, we witnessed weavers draping yarn in waterfalls, potters jumping 30 times on a pile of wet clay and the like. However, most craftsmen have remained firmly committed to the object.

Beyond that, each discipline offers more particular formats—certain types of objects that have traditionally been executed in particular media. Jewelry, or body ornament, has traditionally been made out of metal, for instance, and clothing has traditionally been made out of fiber. Again, the history of craft comes to bear. In choosing a particular format, craftsmen connect themselves with all the historical solutions to their format.

The format that the artist chooses offers a vehicle, and a set of restrictions, within which the artist goes about finding solutions to whatever problems he or she chooses to explore. It is very similar to the idea of a rectangular canvas: the painter uses the canvas as an arena within which to work. The canvas becomes a vehicle for whatever formal, conceptual or intuitive problems that the painter wants to explore.

One format that has attracted considerable attention lately is the vessel. A group of potters in Boulder, Colorado were discussing what they had in common in their work, and they decided that they were all using the vessel—an open, hollow form—as a format. Some were approaching the vessel as strictly functional, others were using the bowl shape as a metaphor and still others were using it as a shape upon which to apply color, pattern and form. The vessel serves as a 6,000 year old format which focuses many layers of historical associations on the present work. Any other format can be used in a similar way; any format can serve as a vehicle for the artist's intentions. The formats offered within the crafts context provide a range of associations, references and historical connections, all of which are available for the craftsman to use. These crafts-oriented formats also suggest esthetic possibilities that are not available to the conventional painter or sculptor.

Value Systems

The last aspect of crafts esthetics that I want to talk about is the separate value systems—that is, ways of discerning good from bad—that have been established in the crafts. These value systems are quite distinct from most of the art theories that have come from painting and sculpture. In fact, the two seem mutually exclusive.

Each of these value systems establishes a particular way of discriminating good work from bad. They seem to exist independently from considerations about formal properties or concepts. The two value systems that seem to be the most influential concern craftsmanship and function.

I'm sure that everyone has been impressed by the craftsmanship in some object, and has made the amazed and delighted observation, "That thing is beautifully put together!" Most metalsmiths react that way when they see the work of Peter Carl Fabergé, court jeweler to the czars. In spite of the mannered and some-

Even if you don't give a rat's ass about fine art, someday, somebody is going to ask you what you are doing.

what derivative forms, the sheer excellence of the craftsmanship is outstanding.

In a case like that, a positive value is given to good craftsmanship. Craftsmen sometimes evaluate a piece on those terms alone. It is the obvious demonstration of skill, the difficulty of the process and the time spent making the object that are appreciated. Usually, fine craftsmanship is visible only to the initiated—the more that you understand about material and about technical processes, the more you tend to appreciate seeing it done well. To someone who is not conversant with the same processes, the craftsmanship remains invisible.

Now, I'm not saying that it's good to evaluate art or craft only in terms of how well it's made. I'm only saying that a lot of craftsmen do it. Judging an object in terms of the quality of its craftsmanship seems to be a distinctive characteristic of the group. There is a similar phenomenon when it comes to function, too.

If an object is intended to be useful, its worth can be evaluated strictly in terms of how well it fulfills all aspects of that function. In the case of a teapot, all the following requirements have to be met: the teapot can't leak; it has to hold enough water to serve a sufficient number of people; the spout mustn't drip; the spout must be positioned at just the right height, the handle must be insulated, and the whole thing has to clean easily. That's a lot of requirements for one simple object. The solutions to those requirements needn't be prosaic or unimaginative, either. A great deal of careful analysis can be applied to a functional object, and there can be elegant and creative solutions to complex problems. Interestingly enough, this evaluation strictly in terms of function is exactly how engineering is judged: the well-designed machine is the one that works well with a minimum of fuss.

Most art theorists will maintain that craftsmanship and functionality are not valid esthetic criteria, and I'm not going to argue the point. Many craftsmen feel that these two value systems are perfectly valid and use them to judge objects every day. I'm only saying that these criteria exist, they are used and they form part of the distinctive crafts esthetic.

The Future of Craft Esthetics

In conclusion, I'd like to say that I truly want to see the crafts accepted as art, as important art, and be given the serious respect that I think they deserve. I want to see the day when no object can be designated as nonart simply because it is made in a particular medium. That day is not here yet. Although progress is being made, the crafts are still a second-class citizen in the art world.

To make more progress in this direction, I think it is important to remember that we are different, in some ways, from painters and sculptors. By talking about—and actually acting upon—these differences, we can bring real understanding to our work.

I want you to be aware that I do not speak "the truth." The categories that I mention here are not fixed and permanent, nor are my statements unquestionably true. I have only been naming some patterns that I have observed. It is your job to accept or reject what I say, as you see fit.

I believe it is also your job to understand what you are doing, and communicate your understanding. Even if you don't give a rat's ass about fine art, someday, somebody is going to ask you what you are doing. If you turn away from them, or if you can't give a clear answer, then a potential for understanding has been lost. This lecture has been my effort to make things clear, to bring understanding to the crafts. Now it's your turn.

Reading List

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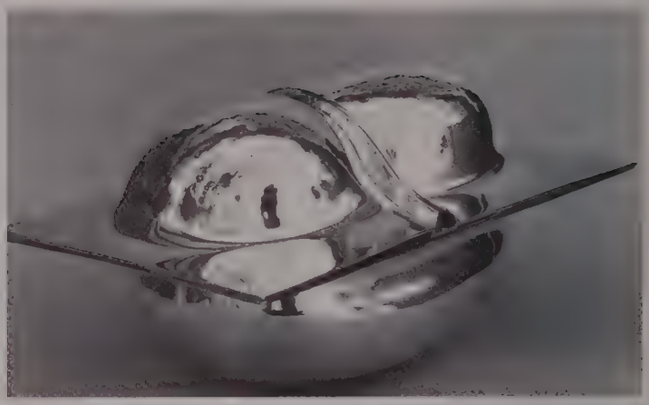
Bruce Metcalf is a self-employed artist-metalsmith living in Boston.

A Decade of Metalsmithing in the United States: 1970–1980

by Robert L. Cardinale

This paper was originally presented to the 1980 annual conference of the Society of North American Goldsmiths in Tucson, Arizona.

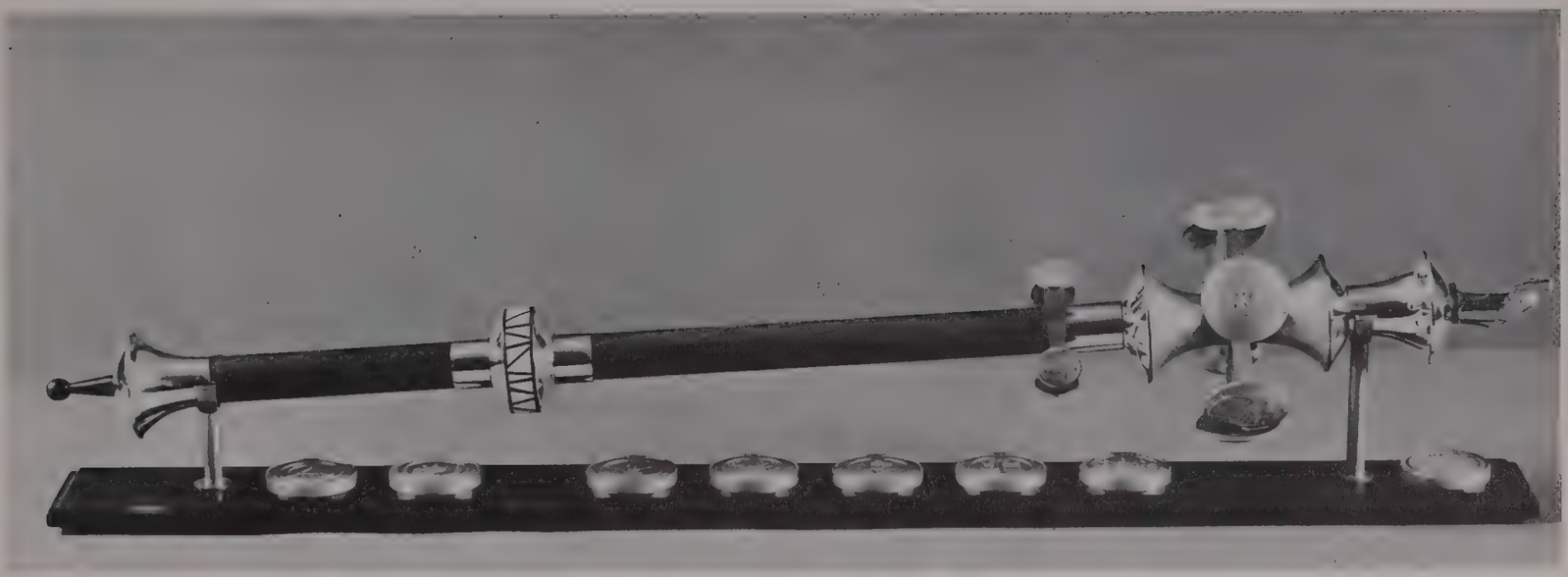


Left: Hans Christensen, *Spice Box*, silver. Photo: courtesy American Craft Council

Top: Alma Eikerman, *Double Bulged Lidded Bowl*, sterling silver

Above: Olaf Skoogfors, *Pin*, gold, sterling silver, pearl, c.1973

Right: Richard Thomas, *Mace*, rosewood, sterling silver, ivory, steel, 42" l



The Founders

While a decade is a neat chronological package, actual events, trends and people do not conform to such divisions. Therefore, in looking at the decade through which we have just passed, it will be necessary, in order to assess and understand what has happened in jewelry and metalsmithing, to look at the careers and developments that begin much earlier than 1970.

Margaret de Patta

Almost singular in the late 1940s and early 1950s for her esthetic vision and sense of jewelry design was Margaret de Patta. Seemingly influenced by the concerns of Bauhaus theory with pure, yet sensitive architectural design, she led the way with jewelry that still seems fresh today. She incorporated original stone shapes in her clean, hard-line designs and set her often nonprecious stones in such a way that light and space became an integral part of the piece. Yet her pieces were very functional. Actually, she used function as a platform for a formalist esthetic.

Richard Thomas

Few art school programs encouraged serious study of the crafts in post-war years. However, Cranbrook Academy of Art in Bloomfield Hills, Michigan was an exception. After Richard Thomas graduated from Indiana State Teachers College (Indiana, Pennsylvania) with a degree in Art Education, he went to Cranbrook to study painting. At that time, the metals program there was not strong and had undergone several changes of director, including Harry Bertois (1939–40). In 1946, while Thomas was still a student at Cranbrook, the German metalsmith who had been directing the program left. Thomas was asked to keep the metal shop open on an informal basis. Upon graduation, Thomas, who had nurtured his interest in metal through study, experimentation and observation, was asked to join the faculty and develop the metals program.

Thomas admits that he was not the world's greatest metalsmith but that he was an outstanding tool clerk. He organized a strong program and his ability to attract serious, talented students and give them the independence they needed, while demanding rigorous time commitments in the studio, seemed to be the key to success. Early students, such as Stanley Lechtzin, Brent Kington and Heikki Seppä have not only distinguished themselves as outstanding artists, but have established strong programs at other schools, which are also developing excellent students. While Thomas's own work has not had a major impact on the field of metal, nationally the fruits of his efforts in program structure and development have been immensely important, especially in the last 10 to 15 years.

Alma Eikerman

Another important figure, significant because of her teaching and also because of her emphasis on the tradition of Scandinavian design and raising techniques is Alma Eikerman. Eikerman graduated from Kansas State Teachers College and took her master's degree at Columbia University in New York in 1942. She was coerced into teaching jewelry at Wichita State University—her first teaching position—and became committed to metalwork. After doing Red Cross work during the war years of 1944–45, she returned briefly to Wichita and soon accepted a teaching position at the University of Indiana, where she continued to teach for more than 30 years. Her own training consisted of attendance at the Hardy and Harmon workshops of 1949–50, brief, but intense work with Baron Eric Fleming (who conducted some of the H and H workshops) and later with Karl Gustan Hansen in Denmark and much experimentation on her own. The work of her students shows a strong command of the skills needed in raising and forming as well as the mark of a very disciplined and demanding instructor.

Hans Christensen

Educated in the strong and formal traditions of the Danish metalsmith, Hans Christensen earned his master of silversmithing degree in 1953 from the Technical Society of Copenhagen, Denmark. Christensen came to the United States in 1954 to begin teaching at the School for American Craftsmen in Rochester, New York, where he still teaches. The clean lines and elegantly pure forms of his pieces speak well of his esthetic orientation. There is great pride in his pieces and their beauty is timeless. As Christensen says, "I am a man happy with my life—doing exactly what I want to be doing." He has contributed not only fine design and form to the field but also that sense of stable serenity which befits a true craftsman. (Christensen was brought to the School for American Craftsmen by John Prip, who will be discussed later.)

Olaf Skoogfors

A man ahead of his times, Olaf Skoogfors was able to take an infatuation with the technique of casting and the dripping wax designs of the 1960s, left over from abstract expressionism, and make strong, yet sensitive cast statements. He was a master of the textured wax module with simple, very subtle variations that are so pleasing. He seemed to be aware of the best work of Europeans, such as Hermann Junger and Reinhold Reiling. He absorbed much from his European trips—two of which he made with Stanley Lechtzin with the expressed purpose of meeting and viewing the work of European jewelers. Skoogfors' strength was in the subtle surprise in composition and the juxtaposition of smooth and textured form. He used stones and pearls as exclamation points in visual statements. Stanley Lechtzin, Albert Paley and Eleanor Moty specifically single him out as a strong influence both in design and conception of jewelry form. Olaf Skoogfors died in 1975 at the age of 45.

Phillip Fike

An artist often does not set out consciously to make a specific contribution. The serious metalsmith certainly does not; rather he is captivated by an idea, a material, a technique, a process of some historical influence. This latter force is what seduced Phillip Fike. His romance with the fibula form began in 1965 on his first visit to Europe. In Italy, especially, he was intrigued with both the mechanical and the esthetic aspects of this rich and diverse form that was both a utilitarian object (it held one's clothing together) and an esthetic object, which also denoted one's social status.

Fike began making and showing these objects, and it was natural that his friend and

former student Stanley Lechtzin would invite him to exhibit his fibula forms at the Tyler School of Art in Philadelphia, where Lechtzin was teaching. This was in the late 1960s, as Fike recalls. The extent of his influence is not clear, but he was both surprised and pleased to walk in on a presentation by Albert Paley, at the 1970 Society of North American Goldsmiths conference in St. Paul, Minnesota, of Paley's recent, excellent work investigating the esthetic relationships between the form and mechanism of the fibula. Fike's work and research with the niello process, which he continues today, is also important.

John Prip

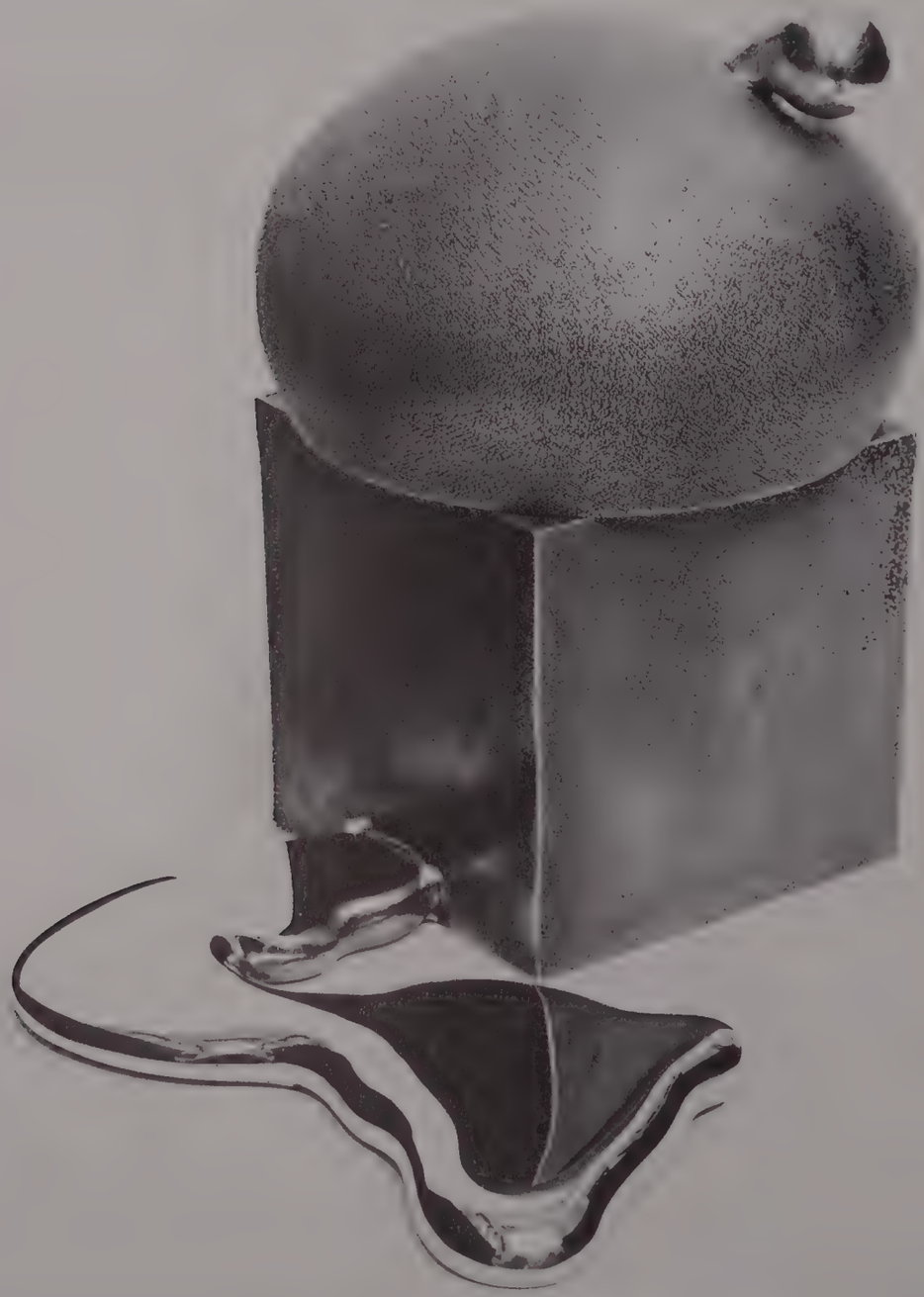
If any single metalsmith had to be named for the strong emphasis on container forms in metalsmithing today, it would certainly be John Prip. Prip is a fourth-generation silversmith, who served an apprenticeship in Denmark. In 1948, he came to the United States to begin teaching at the School for American Craftsmen, at that time in Alfred, New York, and now in Rochester. For a time, Prip devoted his full energies to the well-known Shop 1 which he founded in 1950 with Ronald Hayes Pearson and two other craftsmen as an outlet for their work. Prip has also designed for Reed and Barton and has seen a number of his pieces go into production.

His work of the early and mid-1970s is collagelike, incorporating much seaming and interlocking of forms. He says, "I make lots of parts and pieces. I'll do a lid, decide it's not right, make another or a third. The discarded ones are added to my inventory. If you've been in my shop, you'll have seen all those odd pieces—I've got to have this weird assortment of parts lying around. I'll get halfway through a piece and I'll say, 'Oh there it is, this is the part that's right for this one.' And I start switching, or I'll cut a piece in half. This allows me a certain spontaneity."

An important, well illustrated article on Prip appeared in the February 1973 issue of *Craft Horizons* (now *American Craft*) which set forth both Prip's philosophy and his concept of container as statement. It could easily serve as the chapter in the manifesto of contemporary metalsmiths which extols the virtues and power of statement of the container form. This form, while seeming to hold a secret message, enigmatically holds nothing.

Current metal shows, and especially *Copper 2: the 2nd Copper, Brass and Bronze* exhibition of 1980, are repleat with containers of every imaginable configuration.

These seven people: de Patta, Thomas, Eikerman, Christensen, Skoogfors, Fike and Prip have set the stage for the exciting and rich period of the 1970s. Each has added a singular and unique component to the field of metalsmithing in the United States.



Left: John Prip, *Container with Domed Lid*, brass, 7x5x5". Photo: Bob Hanson. Courtesy American Craft Council

Above: Phillip Fike, *Woven Pectoral Necklace*, iron, 8x7", 1976. Photo: Robert McKeoum

The Framework

The second group of people to be discussed has not only built upon these foundations but has also gone on to explore new styles, techniques and processes. Brent Kington, Stanley Lechtzin, and Heikki Seppä were students together under Richard Thomas at Cranbrook. Arline Fisch and Ronald Hayes Pearson, coming from distinctly different backgrounds, have also made important contributions.

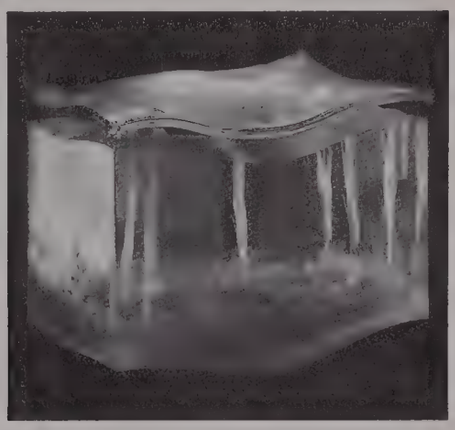
Stanley Lechtzin

Stanley Lechtzin began his metal studies with Phillip Fike at Wayne State University and then went on to complete his master's degree thesis on gold granulation at Cranbrook in 1962. He was hired by Tyler School of Art to reestablish their metals program and began teaching there at about the same time Olaf Skoogfors began teaching at Philadelphia College of Art. The two formed a strong professional and personal friendship.

Lechtzin's major contribution to the field of metalwork are the strong visual statements he makes incorporating the process of electroforming. In the 1963 casting exhibition at the Museum of Contemporary Crafts, he exhibited some cast styrofoam pieces. These pieces were praised by the juror, and curator, Paul Smith, who told Lechtzin that, of course, the pieces were much too heavy to wear. The rich textural statement of the styrofoam lead Lechtzin to look for other ways of achieving these visual qualities. Like everyone else, he had seen bronzed baby shoes and began to investigate to process of depositing metal on nonmetallic surfaces.

With characteristic energy, he volunteered to present his recently developed technology to the First World Congress of Craftsmen in 1964 in New York City. In preparation for this and in order to see what types of visual statements other craftsmen could make with the process, he invited a group of metalsmiths, including Olaf Skoogfors, Phillip Fike, Earl Krentzin and Ron Pearson, to participate in a weekend workshop at Tyler. The group generated more than 30 pieces, all of which were shown at the metal symposium of the World Congress.

Lechtzin quickly learned that he could incorporate gems and minerals in the electroforming process, thus eliminating obstrusive



Left: Stanley Lechtzin, *Cameo Corsage 83-D,* photo-image embedded in acrylic, electroformed silver gilt, pearls, 6¼x3¼x3", 1979

Above: Stanley Lechtzin, *Paten 59D,* cast acrylic, electroplated copper, 11x10½x14¼", 1976

setting structures such as prongs and bezels. However, the need to find the correctly shaped and colored stone frustrated the implementation of many of his ideas. He began to search for color and shape which he could control and thus began his experimentation with plastics. He started by casting resins, but found their qualities undesirable. Therefore, he moved on to his present use of acrylics. Lechtzin works so much with acrylics today that, he notes, ". . . in recent years my work has begun to be dominated by plastics rather than by metal. I am currently using metal as an accent to my plastic forms. . . ."

The program at Tyler under Lechtzin has produced some outstanding metalworkers, two of whom, Albert Paley and Eleanor Moty, will be discussed later.

Brent Kington

Of equal importance for his contribution to the metals field is Brent Kington, a fellow student of Lechtzin's at Cranbrook, but a metalsmith with a totally different orientation. Kington began work in metal with Carlyle Smith at the University of Kansas. Later, at Cranbrook, he concentrated on production silversmithing and upon graduation interviewed with several major firms. However, at the strong urging of Richard Thomas, he agreed to take a job at Southern Illinois University in Carbondale. Thomas's instincts were correct, as the strength of the Kington's program and the uniqueness of its graduates show. Among them are Mary Lee Hu, Michael Croft, Elliot Pujol and Gary Noffke.

Kington's work at Carbondale at first showed no major direction. It took the birth of his first child, Todd, to free the joyous and playful spirit of this man and allow it to manifest itself in metal. First came baby rattles, whistles and then pull toys. All were precious heirlooms of love meant to be used by generation after generation. To his amazement, adults were intrigued with these toys, too, and enjoyed them almost as much as children.

In 1964, Kington made his first trip to New York City for the World Congress of Craftsmen and while there he visited the armour collection at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. He was so overwhelmed by it that on the train back to Carbondale he made up his mind to become a blacksmith. While continuing to make his cast silver tricycles and flying machines, he set about collecting tools and information about blacksmithing.

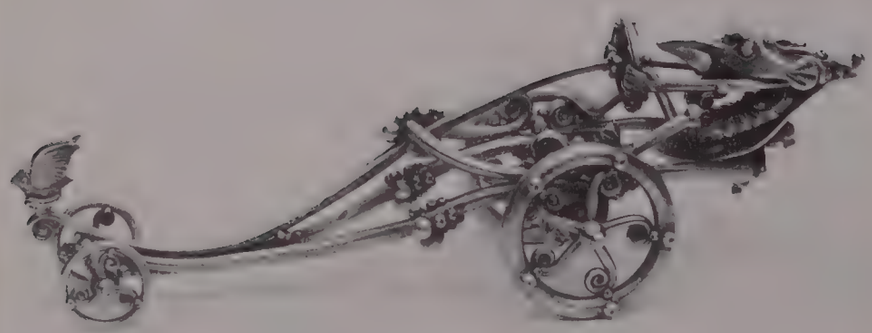
His first serious iron pieces were finished in 1969. They were large ridable toys, strongly reminiscent of his tricycles and flying machines. One was a five-foot version of a toy helicopter and another a large interpretation

Below left: Brent Kington, *Dragster*, cast sterling silver, 12", 1968

Below right: Fred Fenster, *Cooking Pot*, copper, 1977

Right: Ronald Hayes Pearson, *Neckpiece*, sterling silver and shell, 1978

Far right: Heikki Seppä, *Helicoidal Move*, hollow form, sterling silver, 11x12", 1975. Photo: Peter Zimmermann



of a folded glider. With photos of the pieces, he went to New York City to talk with Paul Smith, who was very excited about the ironwork. Smith called gallery owner Lee Nordness and Nordness met Kington, liked the work, purchased the glider and commissioned a smaller silver version for the exhibtion *Objects U.S.A.* Kington's commitment to iron was now stronger than ever. He discovered Alex Bealer's book, *The Art of Blacksmithing,* and invited Bealer to a conference and workshop at Carbondale. This 1970 workshop sparked the blacksmithing renaissance that we are experiencing in the United States today, as serious metalsmiths from around the country attended, including Stanley Lechtzin, Ron Pearson, Fred Fenster, J. Fred Woell, Richard Mawdsley and Robert Ebendorf.

Heikki Seppä

Trained in the European tradition, Heikki Seppä has gained prominence in metalsmithing in the United States. He received his master silversmith status in Helsinki, Finland and then spent a year studying with Georg Jensen in Denmark. In 1960, Seppä renewed his interest in metal by enrolling in Cranbrook for a year. His major contribution to metalsmithing has been in the development of a fine network of textures for which he used the term "reticulation." This experimentation began late in 1960 just before he left Cranbrook and was to occupy him for nearly 10 years. As his mastery of the technique grew, he became more concerned with the absence of form. He began to notice the way in which the metal itself embraced space. According to Seppä, this allowed him a more spontaneous expression. He not only developed the forms known as shell structures, but has also coined an entirely new terminology for them, such as "spiculum" (a hollow, tapered, tabular form) and "domical" (a bowl-shaped form). This major philosophical change, from form following function to the reverse, has led Seppä to tell his students, "Leave function alone, because once you have developed enough understanding of form and the sources of form, it is simple to invest a function in a form."

This esthetic orientation is a manifestation of one of the many directions in metal today—the concern with a formal or expressive statement which transcends function or displaces it all together.

Fred Fenster

Fred Fenster is noted for his statements of pure, functional form in both copper and pewter. Fenster has a background in industrial arts and after completing his degree at Cranbrook he studied with Hans Christensen for a time, because of the kinship he felt to Scandanavian metalwork and design. In discussing his work, Fenster notes that it has not changed a great deal. He works in a subtractive way, taking everything he possibly can away and leaving the core. Every line, every curve has to make good esthetic sense without embellishment. A strong ethical sense dominates his philosophy of metal. "I find metal working a retreat," he says. "It's a clean world. The control over a material makes it a moral situation. If you do each thing properly, you're going to get a reward at the end, if you're lucky. Where in life can you get that?"

Mary Ann Scherr

Professional energy and a thirst for challenge seem to be what keep Mary Ann Scherr at the forefront of metalsmithing and jewelry. Although her work with stainless steel was groundbreaking, her major contribution to date is her functional body jewelry. The concepts of electronic jewelry came out of her clothing designs for Miss Ohio in 1969. Her space-theme costume carried body-function buttons. Scherr thought why can't we have jewelry that does actually function? She began researching systems that would be small enough to integrate with the human form. In 1972, she produced a bracelet which monitored heart rate. A light indicated the beat and any radical change triggered an alarm. The media picked up the story. The results were portable EKG necklaces, functional trachea covers and more. Scherr inspires the metalsmith to contribute to contemporary society.

Arline Fisch

Arline Fisch studied metal at the University of Illinois at Urbana, but the bulk of her metal knowledge has been self-taught and enriched by a year-long Fulbright grant which she spent at the School of Arts and Crafts in Copenhagen. After this year of intense apprentice-type work she returned to the United States and took a job at Skidmore College. This was important for her, as the job required that she also teach weaving. In preparation, she studied at a special workshop with Jack Lenor Larsen and Ted Hallman at Haystack Mountain School of Crafts. Her interest in weaving grew and now the rich integration of textile techniques in metal is one of the distinguishing features of her work. Fisch has also made important contributions through her service on the World Crafts Council, the Society for North American Goldsmiths and the American Crafts Council.

Left: Mary Ann Scherr, *Torah Shield and Pointer*, silver, brass, gold, steel, moonstone, ebony, 1976

Above: Arline Fisch, *Bracelet*, woven silver with blue macaw feathers

Right: Albert Paley, *Brooch*, sterling silver, 14K gold, 4½x7½", 1977

Ronald Hayes Pearson

Ronald Hayes Pearson is one of the few practicing metalsmiths who has maintained a high level of professional visibility because of his fine work and because he has survived financially outside of that protective container of a university art department. After training at the School for American Craftsmen in 1948 he started a business. He has been rewarded. He was retained by Hickock and won a Reed and Barton competition, enabling him to work in and learn the operation of their factory. He also designed a line of flatware, called "Smithsonian," which is marketed by that institution.

Commercial success is not a negative factor in Pearson's approach to a piece of jewelry. Certain restrictions, such as economic feasibility for commercial manufacturing, are part of the rationale for a design. He feels these are no more restrictive than restraints encountered because of material limitations.

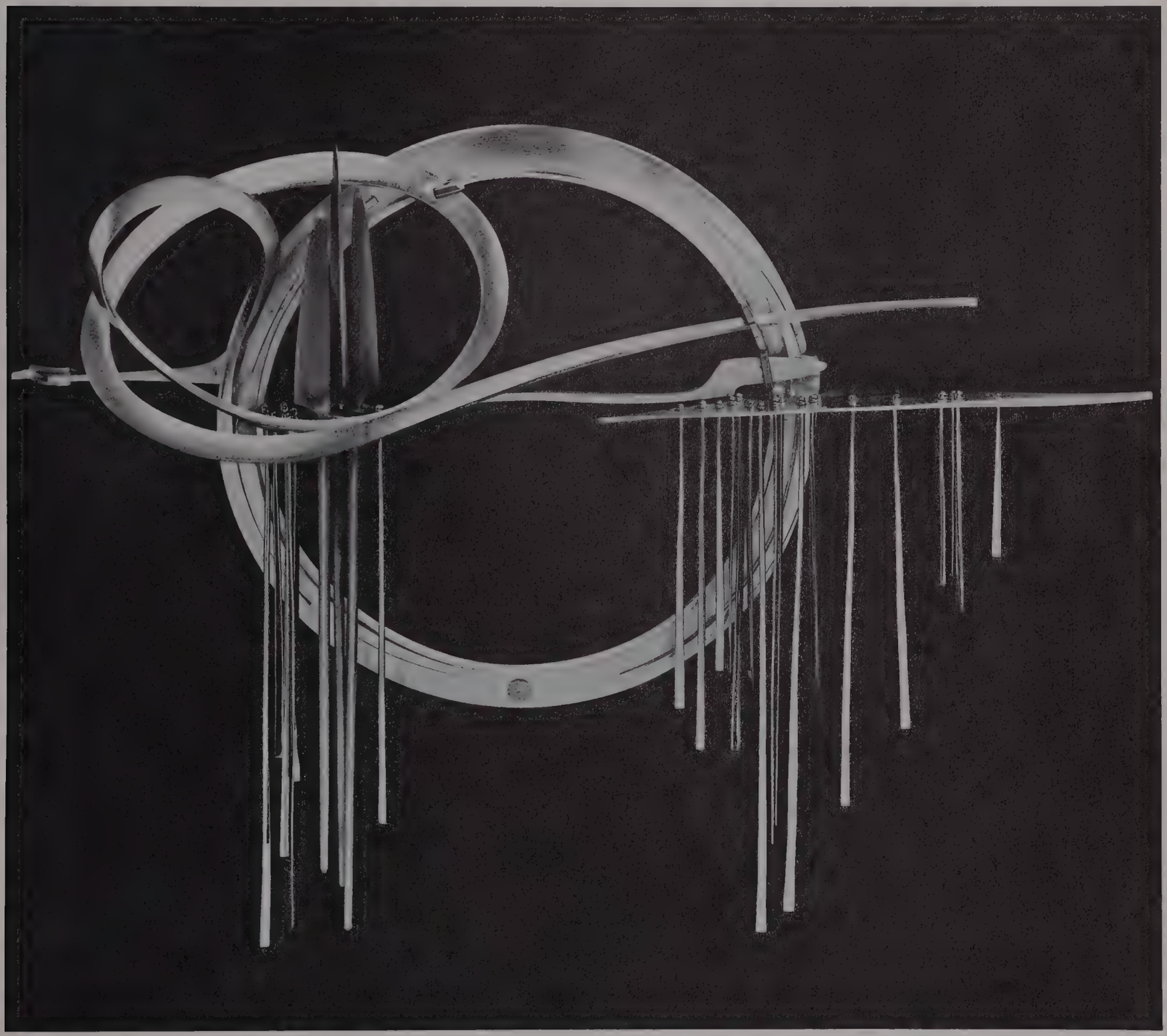
The Superstructure

The third group in this investigation of contemporary metalsmithing is also very exciting, as well as very hard to discuss, as it is so close to us that it is difficult to decide clearly just who will make a strong mark or a lasting contribution. Because of this, only a few important artists will be considered here.

Albert Paley

The first is Albert Paley, so well known for his flair and flourish of the whiplike line in iron, which literally became a national style for a time in the early 1970s. Paley studied with Lechtzin at Tyler School of Art, receiving his degree in 1969. Midway through his studies, he traveled to Europe to visit major smiths and returned with an advanced and mature view of the role of the metalsmith in our society. He continued work on the fibula and brooch form with the concept of integrating mechanism and form. This integration and his resolution of it has had a strong impact on recent metalwork.

In 1970, Paley became intrigued by the plasticity of iron. He notes that, "When it is hot, iron is extremely plastic and fluid. It is very submissive and yielding to a cause-and-effect response, a directness and spontaneity. The paradox is that one is able to visually

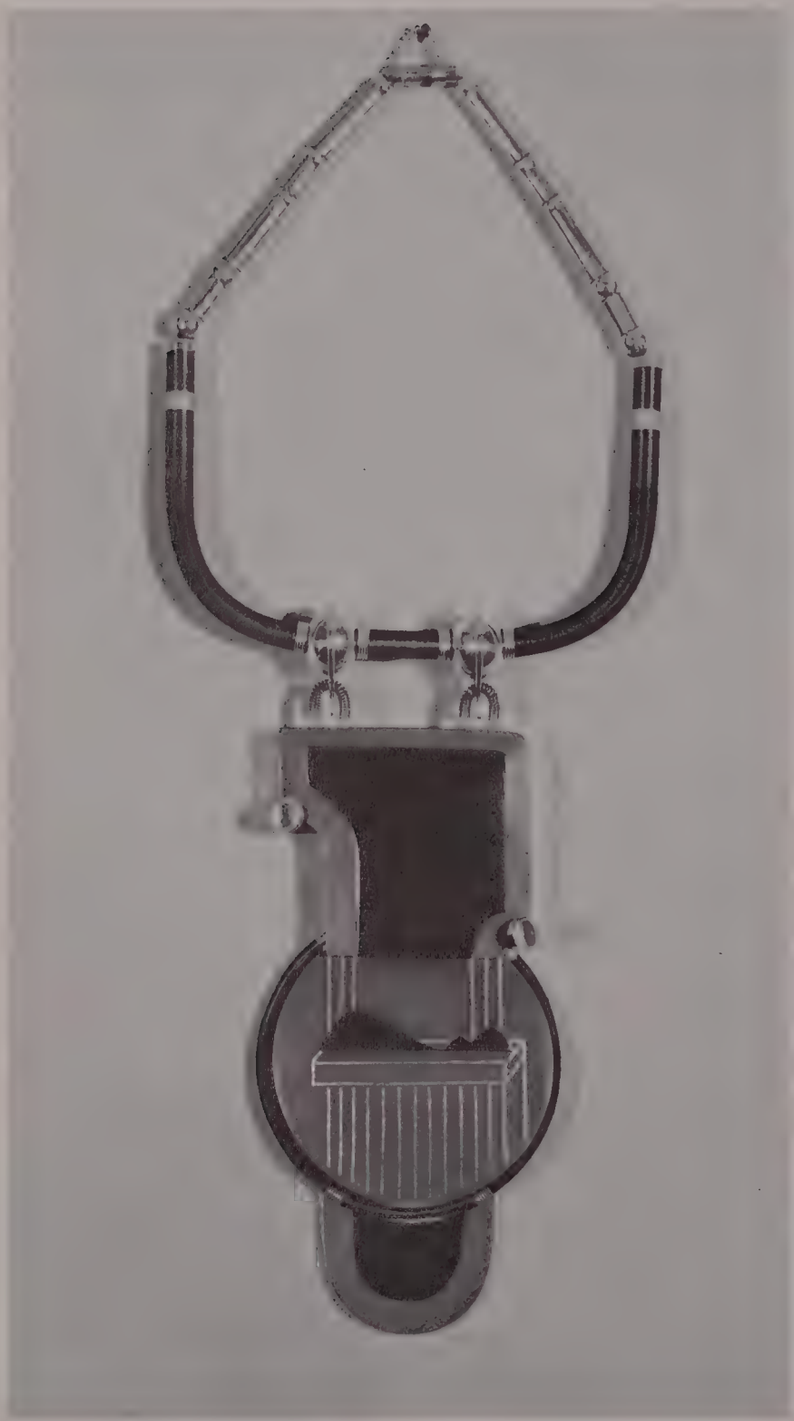


record all this in a very hard, rigid and permanent material."

Paley is a classic example of someone infatuated with the properties of a material that will cooperate with the expression of his concepts.

Eleanor Moty

Eleanor Moty was a graduate of Tyler at about the same time as Albert Paley. As Paley was intrigued with the characteristics of material in yielding pure formal statements, Moty became involved with process, first electroforming and then photoetching, which she had studied as an undergraduate at the University of Illinois under Robert von Neumann. While there, she was fortunate enough to work with an engineering technician who had access to a very well equipped engineering laboratory. Later, she chose to study with Lechtzin because of his work in electroforming. Her graduate work involved much trial and error, but resulted in a high degree of control of the process which she calls photofabrication—a major contribution not only technically but expressively, as well. With photofabrication she was able to incorporate intense and sensitive moments of visual memory through the use of photographic images in her pieces. Moty generously shared her knowledge of process and idea, and as others began to gain expertise, they in turn forced her into new domains.



Far left: Hiroko Sato Pijanowski, *Indiana Pendant*, brass, copper, sterling silver, Shakudo, fine silver, moonstones and silk thread

Left: J. Fred Woell, *Come Alive, You're in the Pepsi Generation Badge*, copper, brass, steel, glass, silver, etc., 4x4x5/16" d., 1966

Above: Gene Pijanowski, *Finger at Rest*, brass, Shakudo, fine silver, copper

Right: Richard Mawdsley, *Feast Bracelet*, sterling silver, jade, pearls, 1974

Hiroko Sato and Eugene Pijanowski

Both material and process seem to combine in the direction of Hiroko Sato and Eugene Pijanowski. Because of Hiroko's traditional Japanese background and Gene's interest in the technique of mokume, the couple went to Japan to live for nearly three years after graduating from Cranbrook. (Gene's thesis at Cranbrook in 1969 was on soldered mokume.) In Japan they produced contemporary Western-style jewelry while studying Japanese metal techniques.

After returning to the United States in 1972, they began to collaborate on pieces strong in graphic orientation, utilizing line inlay, texturing (chiseling), and fused mokume, all techniques they had learned in Japan.

This couple has been key in spreading the knowledge of technique and process in the tradition of mokume-gane while they continue to experiment with new alloys and patterns.

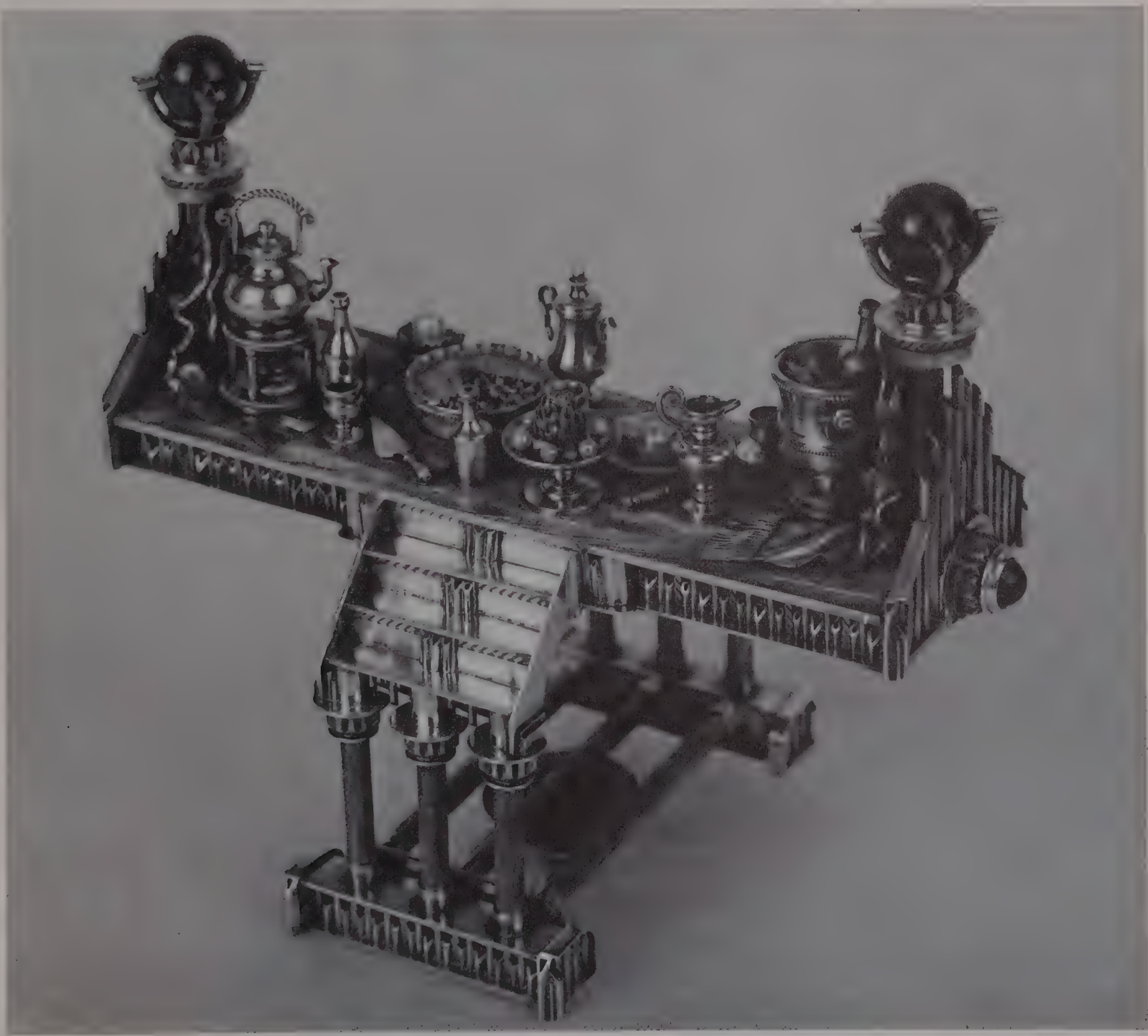
J. Fred Woell

Most contemporary metalsmiths do not seem to be affected by the trends in contemporary painting and graphics; not so J. Fred Woell. Woell's impressive formal education includes five degrees, including two MFAs, one in art metal and graphics from the University of Wisconsin and the other in sculpture from Cranbrook. In the mid-1960s, at the encouragement of Frank Gallo, Woell began to work with found objects. This was the beginning of his social commentary pieces. He found that he was able to make both serious and humorous statements, and, while they seemed to come directly out of Funk and Pop Art, they were trend-setting in the area of metalworking. These statement pieces are key to assessing the recent work of Woell and an important step in metalworking in general.

Richard Mawdsley

Elegant, and yet manifesting an almost maniacal sense of self-indulgence are terms that can be used to describe the work of Richard Mawdsley. The intense juxtaposition of hundreds of tiny fabricated objects make his work realistic but totally unbelievable.

Mawdsley studied with Carlyle Smith at the University of Kansas. His imagery harks back to the piles of dismantled foam machinery he played on as a child. He feels the baroque toys of Brent Kington give validity to his own whimsical creations and that the sophisticated, classic work of John Paul Miller, so technically perfect in execution, influences and balances his orientation. The contribution of Richard Mawdsley is not technique, process or material, but rather his unique personal vision which reveals itself in magnificent, intricate detail.



Mary Lee Hu

Another artist characterized by unique handling of traditional material is Mary Lee Hu. Her first experiments incorporating wire with traditional fiber techniques were done in 1966–67 during her MFA work at Carbondale. The combination was right for her. The method and the material worked beautifully together. Describing her highly individualistic approach, she says, "I don't separate myself from my material with a lot of tools. . . . I'm working from one end of the piece to the other, doing all the work on it. When I move from it, it's finished completely. It's the way a weaver works, not the way a metalsmith works."

Like Mawdsley, her work has few imitators. The work of both is widely praised and understood, yet few people have been able to build upon the foundations which they have laid down.

Robert Ebendorf

The last metalsmith to be discussed is important not only because of his fine work, but also and especially for his intense professional energy and the rich content of his ideas. Robert Ebendorf followed in the educational footsteps of Brent Kington in Lawrence, Kansas. They both went to the same high school art program and both did their undergraduate work with Carlyle Smith. Both were also strongly influenced by Robert Montgomery, who was teaching at the University of Kansas at the time.

In 1963–64, Ebendorf went to Norway on a Fulbright grant to study at the State School for Applied Arts and Crafts in Oslo. He came away heavily imbued with the strong, clean line and the rigorous craftsmanship characteristic of Scandinavian metalwork. Almost in rebellion, he turned to natural materials and textured surfaces when he returned to the United States.

In 1965–66 he again went to Norway for a year to work and learn production processes at Norway Silver Designs in Fredrikstad.

In 1968, Ebendorf was involved in the initial meetings in Chicago of a distinguished group of jewelers and metalsmiths who founded the Society of North American Goldsmiths (SNAG). Following Brent Kington's term as President, Ebendorf took office and moved the organization ahead at what some consider reckless speed. His energy seemed limitless as he initiated the first of a series of four National Student Metal Invitation catalogs and served to bridge the communications gap between metal students and instructors around the country.

During his term as President of SNAG, *Gold Dust,* a mimeographed newsletter became the full-fledged illustrated *Goldsmiths Journal.*

Ebendorf's own work evolved through a

Left: Robert Ebendorf, *Necklace*, sterling silver, ivory, copper, 1964–65

Above: Eleanor Moty, *Landscape Handbag,* 1973, 5¼x2", silver with silver photo-electroplated image, brass, copper, 14K gold, bronze, agate, leather, 5¼x4x2", 1973

Right: Mary Lee Hu, *Neckpiece 13,* fine silver, 24K gold, 12K gold-filled brass, ruby, pearls. 8½x9½", 1974

series of fantasy machines to an almost graphic approach. Strongly influenced by the idea and imagery of the German metalsmith Claus Bury, Ebendorf's work reflects his own vision and personal energy.

Conclusion

The contributions of many other metalsmiths and jewelers, such as John Paul Miller, June Schwartz, Kenneth Bates, William Harper and Harold Helwig, need to be studied for their impact on the field of metalwork. Still others for their books, such as Robert von Neumann, Philip Morton and Oppi Untract, also need to be discussed.

This list could go on to include many others—people working in enamel, titanium, graphics and metal, electronics and numerous other processes, materials and personal styles. Each artist is important in some unique, personal way, and, collectively, the work composes itself to form a pattern more exciting , more complex, with more subtle variations than any one writer could ever imagine, and this mosaic is metalsmithing today.

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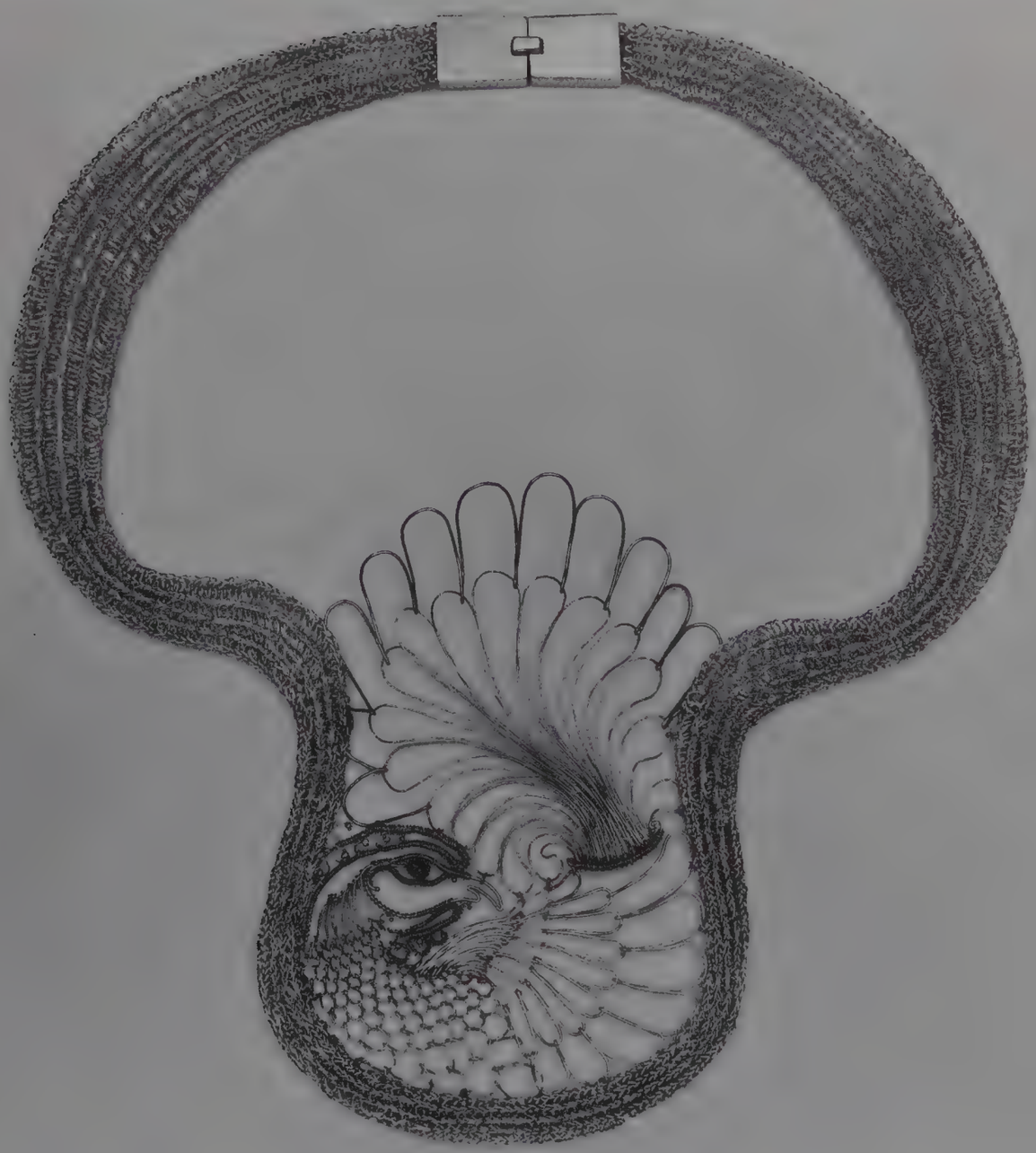


CHAMPION VASE

Chinese, Qing dynasty, first half 18th century
Gilt-bronze and cloisonné enamels, h. 23.8 cm

Collection of Robert and Marian Clague, currently on loan to the Phoenix Art Museum

Photo courtesy of the Phoenix Art Museum

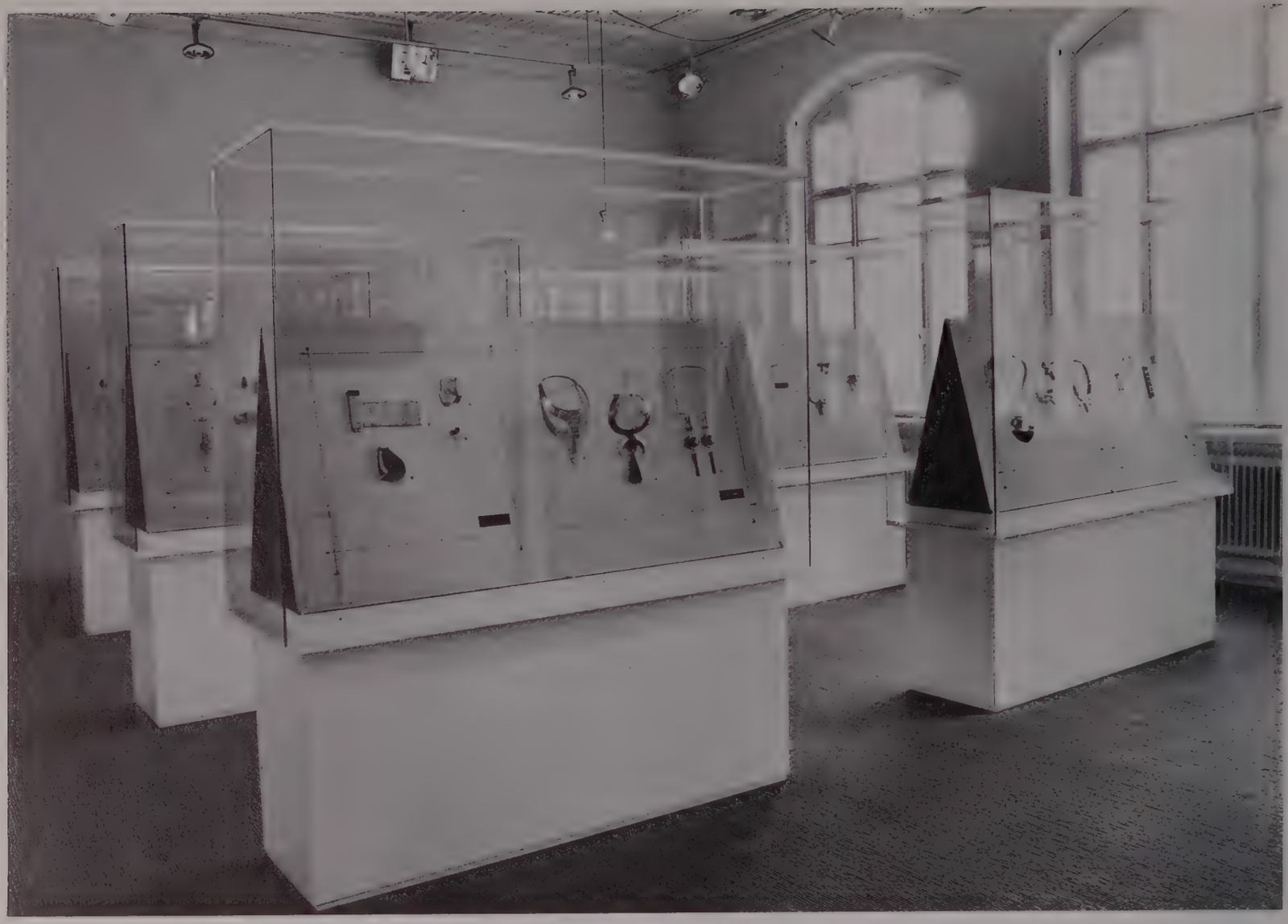
The making of cloisonné enamels in China can be traced back at least to the 14th century, a time of foreign rule in China under the Mongols of the Yuan dynasty (1279–1367). In the century following Genghis Khan's conquest of much of the Eurasian continent, Mongol states in the Near East and China were in close contact. Through these channels Byzantine enamel techniques spread eastward to China through the intermediary of the Near East. Indeed, a Turkish bowl of the 12th century remains the closest parallel among Western enamels to the Chinese style and technique, which was distinguished by its use of a copper or bronze body and opaque enamels. The basic process of cloisonné manufacture remains little changed since its first minor technical innovations took place during the 17th and 18th centuries. Copper gradually replaced bronze for the underlying metal body. Solder, used in the early stages, was ultimately abandoned in favor of glue as a means of attaching the cloisons to the body. The cloisons themselves changed from hammered bronze wires in early examples to drawn copper wires in later works. Gold was rarely used in Chinese cloisonné but does appear in some 18th century pieces made for the Imperial court. In coloring, the major innovation seems to have been the introduction, in about 1720, of a rose pink derived from gold chloride.

This champion vase from the Qing dynasty (1644–1911) combines gilt-bronze sculptural forms with cloisonné enamel surface on a heavy cast-bronze base. The shape has its origin in a double-bronze vessel probably conceived as a trophy and based on the archer's quiver: the form goes back at least to the Han dynasty (206 BC–221 AD) On the front, between the two vessels, a falcon with outstretched wings subdues a feline monster, who is visible from the rear on the other side. Above, a curled dragon with bifurcated tail acts as a handle for the double lid. On the reverse, above the tail and hindquarters of the monster, another dragon unifies the two cylinders and preserves the compact silhouette by spreading to either side. The head is turned so that the dragon, a frequent Imperial symbol, seems to stare defiantly at the viewer. Strong curvilinear elements here contrast with the formal verticals and horizontals on the front.

Since most of the crafts came under direct Imperial supervision in China during the 18th century, the decorative arts of the period share a single stylistic development. The design of this piece is closely paralleled to two champion vases of jade, one in the Victoria and Albert Museum in London, and one in the National Palace Museum in Taipei. Another champion vase in cloisonné enamels was once a part of the Avery collection of Chinese cloisonné and is now in the Brooklyn Museum.

Both the cloisonné enamel and the gilt-bronze figures represent the highest quality workmanship of the period. A Ming-style color scheme prevails, dominated by red, yellow and cobalt blue against a turquoise ground, but a fine mixture of small amounts of cobalt blue in with the turquoise gives a rich, velvety color not seen in earlier work. The lotus scrolls, too, conform in general to the classic lotus pattern of Ming decorative arts but depart from that prototype by introducing a more complex arrangement and coloring of the lotus blossoms. Each blossom seems to have two layers of petals in red, blue, purple and brown, and an aura of white enamel highlights the center of each blossom. The splayed ring foot of each cylinder bears a pattern of lotus panels, a decorative device common in blue-and-white porcelains of the Ming and Qing dynasties. The necks of the cylinders, linked to the ring feet in profile, echo the large lotus motifs in decoration.

Claudia Brown
Adjunct Curator of Oriental Art
Phoenix Art Museum



SNAG European Exhibit Visits Helsinki

During the exhibition, a pad was made available for the public to write their comments. From some of these Oppi fashioned a poem, translated from the original Finnish and arranged from negative to positive. Each comment is from a different person.

Are these jewelry? • They are not jewelry! • Has anyone seen anything like this before? • No! • Cannot be true • Better not to speak about it • Terrible, nauseating, typical Yankee mish-mash • Now I understand the tastefulness of Finnish jewelry • Has anyone told Americans about functionalism? • Quite crazy ideas • Freedom without criticism • Ugly, Clumsy, Violent, Wild • Can you find wearers for this jewelry? • They are not thinking of anything but their self importance • Clear decadence • Check the artists mental health! • He-he-he, Hu-hu • Shouldn't jewelry be practical? • Interesting but impossible to wear • Massive, heavy, slave necklaces • We would collapse under these • For giants, not present-day people • Jewelry for feminists: "Don't come close to me" • Difficult when embracing • Oh, poor girls, in America! • Shapes and materials have been forced for the sake of invention • Mechanical without humanness • Urban, suitable for technocrats • More art than jewelry • What kind of people wear these small sculptures? • Very skillful, often crazy • Interesting, awakens new

SNAG European exhibit installed at the Museum of Applied Arts in Helsinki.

Left: Large room displaying jewelry. Right: Small room containing objects. Photos: Johnny Korkman

ideas • New, but tremendously interesting • New, fresh, nice • Nice to look at but I wouldn't buy or wear them • Special • Surprising • Astonishing, splendid, exciting art • I look to my joy • I don't feel bad anymore, thank you • More than jewelry • Awakens thought • New impulse giving • Well carried out creations • Fine that one has the courage to make such original works • Without prejudice, lots of professional skill • Honest-jewelry making • Many techniques we do not use • New dimensions in jewelry design • Hooray for something else than precious metals • Hooray for new experiments • Different from Europeans • Reflects our time well • Strong fantasy, used finely • Very American • Just fantastic • Nice to see American designs • America has always been in the vanguard, courageous, enthusiastic, skillful—so was this • Good exhibition, excellent that it has been brought to Finland. I'm speechless. I don't remember ever seeing in my life as effective an exhibition. If in the future the exhibits continue on as high a level as this, I intend to move to this museum • Good display • More of such exhibitions • Thank you •

The SNAG European Exhibit Visits Helsinki

by Oppi Untracht

While many were attending the Tucson SNAG conference in March, on the other side of the globe, the work of some SNAG members burst upon the Finnish scene. The exhibition, pushed to realization in Finland by yours truly, took place at the Museum of Applied Arts in Helsinki from February 20 to March 23. It was installed in one large and one small adjoining rooms: jewelry in the first, objects in the second. The following is a glimpse of what took place.

With funds from the American Center, the silver-backed announcement poster, printed in American flag colors, featured a blowup of a necklace by Leslie Leupp. The poster was displayed all over town, in book shops, art galleries and libraries. The Center also printed handsome name cards for each person's work and a catalog in Finnish.

Installation

Five days before the opening, I helped unpack the well-constructed crate. Without any previous preparation, I was asked to be the "architect" and install the exhibition. After the initial shock, and with the help of two young women from the Finnish Society of Crafts and Design who had engineered the receiving and sending off of the show, plus the harried museum staff who were frantically installing another show against a closer deadline, I began. I quickly designed the show in my head using existing cases, and ordered mounting materials, which came the next day. Now the countdown was four days. Because of lack of time and limited funds, the installation had to be simple and cheap.

In my mind, each individual's work should be given a clear space in which to breathe. My solution was to place in each of the seven glass cases two large, horizontal, gray, softly textured construction boards, arranged leaning against each other like a peaked roof. The triangular gablelike areas were filled in with stiff black matt cardboard, edges folded nearly back. In the large room, the works of each jeweler were placed in a group on these boards, mostly two people per board, four to six per case, which was seen on both sides. Each person's territory was deliniated by "fence" lines, made by tying black sewing thread to black map pins.

In the second, smaller room, three such cases, equipped with clear glass shelves, were used to hold objects, and in two instances pieces of jewelry by members who showed both, to continue the idea of showing each artist's work as a unit. The lighting was good, both natural and artificial. After four full days of work, the installation was finished, 10 minutes before a flood of press people descended on the show. My press release helped provide information on the background and importance of the exhibition, which showed a kind of inidivual work rare in Finland, where most jewelry is mass produced. Photographs by a professional photographer of five pieces which I had selected were also available to the press.

Reaction

A series of reviews and notices appeared in magazines and newspapers of at least three cities: Helsinki, Tampere and Porvoo. I contacted still other media to help push publicity.

The show's elegant opening was attended by about 250 invited guests. The acting Ambassador, Charge d'Affairs Mr. Frey, gave an understanding speech followed by mine, in which I tried to stress the importance the exhibition had for Finland. Later, Finland's President Kekkonen visited the show. At this first foreign, meaning non-Scandanavian, exhibition at the museum, which is only a year old, attendance was very high, and a good precedent was established.

The last week of the show coincided with the opening of an important exhibition of *Fabergé and His Contemporaries* at the museum. This drew endless lines of people who almost all also saw the SNAG show. Many comments were made comparing the two, the distance in time between them only 90 years.

If the Finnish reaction is anything like what happened in other places, the show is a great success. This was the opinion of Mr. Peltonen, director of the museum and Mr. Periäinen, director of the crafts and design organization. It stimulated a reaction, whether positive or negative, and that was healthy,

Some Incidental Remarks

Several of the more fragile pieces of jewelry were received already damaged. All were shown with the aid of pins and tape. Maintenance on these pieces is practically impossible. Many were tarnished and were therefore criticized for "poor finish." Some could be brightened with a hand polishing cloth, others one would not dare to touch for fear of altering the original finish or because of their fragility. This is a grave problem when a show travels for so long. The objects did not "speak" to the Finnish audience as well as the jewelry. There were perhaps too few of them to make a real impression. Should shows of objects and jewelry be separate in the future?

The Art-Jewelry of America: a Rationale

The following is the text of the press release written by Oppi Untract on the occasion of the SNAG exhibition in Helsinki.

The phenomenon of the vigorous development of American one-of-a-kind creative jewelry as a legitimate form of artistic expression, and the fact that at least half the art jewelers in America are women, are relatively recent occurrences. Although developments in art jewelry started there perhaps no more than 50 years ago, within the last decade jewelry has reached a high level of artistic achievement that has generated excitement and wide public interest.

This jewelry would not exist unless certain conditions had not prevailed beforehand. First and foremost is the need for artist-craftsmen who are trained and equipped to carry out advanced technological skills in metalwork, lapidary and stone setting. By mastering these skills, the craftsman can make concrete whatever personal fantasy images he or she conjures up. Second is the need for dedication and commitment by such persons to the idea that the concerns of art can be expressed in the form of jewelry which, like any other art form, is capable of communicating ideas expressive of the times in which we live. Third is the existence of an atmosphere that encourages unlimited fredom of artistic expression and allows the artist-craftsman to follow any direction in which his or her personal creative inclinations may go. Fourth is the economic possibility to survive while engaged in artistic self-realization.

All these circumstances occur in the United States of America. Proof is seen in this exhibition, embodied in the works of the 39 creative art jewelers who were selected among members of the Society of North American Goldsmiths, the only national professional organization of art-jewelers in America. The catalog for this exhibition tells us that all but three of the artist jewelers are associated with American universities or art schools in which they are professors, assistant or associate professors or heads of metal or jewelry departments. This means they have all had full normal training in design and the techniques of their craft. Also, because they retain educational positions which at least partially support them economically, they might be called either part-time educators or part-time jewelers. This does not diminish their passion and devotion to the field, the quality and importance of their expression or the fact that their work and ideas consistently influence the large numbers of formally trained students whom they contact. Their work also influences the thousands of self-trained persons in America who today make creative jewelry as an avocation or hobby and who through publications are exposed to the ideas of these leaders in the field. In fact, it is just because they are not totally dependent on commercial success as a means of survival, that, enviably, their work can retain the utmost artistic integrity and be free from any evidence of artistic compromise simply for the sake of salability.

Besides being an outlet for the artistic concerns of the artist-jeweler, jewelry fulfills a variety of important psychological needs for the wearer. Jewelry has always satisfied the eternal, innate desire existing in all people in all times and cultures, to decorate their being, enhance self-image and satisfy the ego.

Creative jewelry is a unique art form in the sense that it is portable art that can be worn. The purchaser-wearer can identify his or her personality with that of the artist-jeweler and his or her work by placing the art object physically upon the body. When this happy event occurs, the objectives of both creator and wearer meet. By wearing jewelry, the individual makes a personal statement about him or herself that is seen by all. This human need to visually communicate with others by such means leads us to expect that jewelry, in some form, will always be with us. Should jewelry not then embody the highest possible cultural achievement of our artist-jewelers?

Here lies the message of the jewelry in this exhibition to Finland, where jewelry is primarily made by mass production for a mass market, though it is often artist-designed. If freedom of individual artistic expression is to continue to be considered as a legitimate aspect of the art world, there must always be a place for the individual artist-jeweler. To those of us who believe in the importance of a spontaneous and vigorous cultural diversity, public patronage of the artist-craftsman, who works in any medium, remains the best form of encouragement.

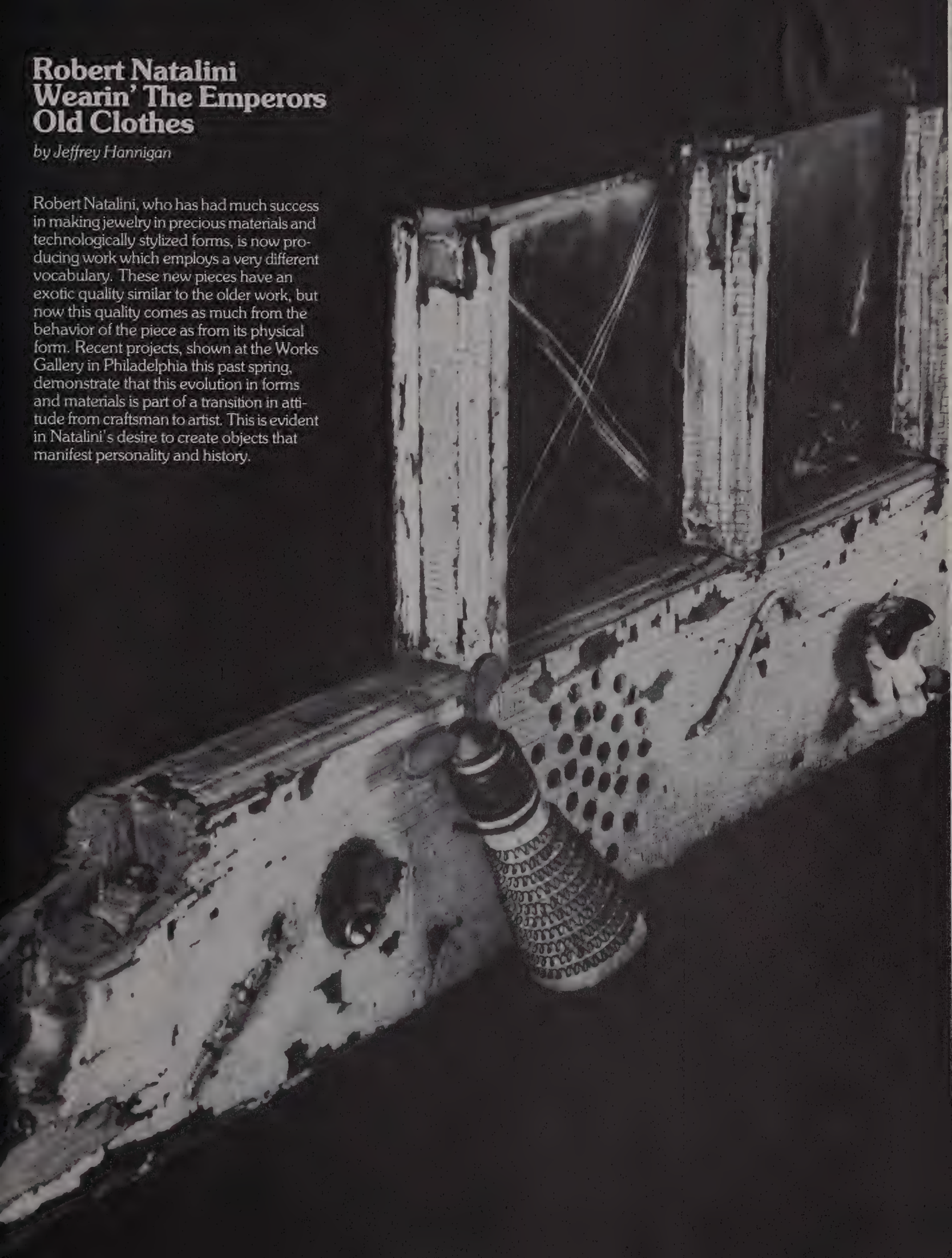
Oppi Untracht is an American metalsmith living in Finland. His new book Jewelry Concepts and Technology *(Doubleday) will be published in 1981.*

Catalogs of the SNAG European Exhibition, featuring 39 Pro members, are available from the SNAG Book Department. The 48-page catalog is $10 for nonmembers, $5.50 for SNAG members, plus $1 postage (overseas postage $1.50). Mail order and payment (in US Dollars) to: SNAG
8589 Wonderland NW
Clinton, OH 44216

Robert Natalini Wearin' The Emperors Old Clothes

by Jeffrey Hannigan

Robert Natalini, who has had much success in making jewelry in precious materials and technologically stylized forms, is now producing work which employs a very different vocabulary. These new pieces have an exotic quality similar to the older work, but now this quality comes as much from the behavior of the piece as from its physical form. Recent projects, shown at the Works Gallery in Philadelphia this past spring, demonstrate that this evolution in forms and materials is part of a transition in attitude from craftsman to artist. This is evident in Natalini's desire to create objects that manifest personality and history.



The new pieces, in the form of wall-hung icons or shrine-like boxes, are constructed from weathered boards, pieces of bone, buttons, radio tubes and ceramic fragments. These materials retain an archaeology of origin and use, although they have been discarded by modern society, like the emperor's old clothes, as part of the technological Darwinism of our time. At the opposite pole are the guts of these pieces, the electronic circuitry which animate these objects with carefully orchestrated sound and light.

In contrast to the remnant artifacts that are the framework of the pieces, these circuits represent the frontier of technological progress. Christened with their own bizarre nomenclature these MOSFETS, Nand and Nor gates, behave with their own inscrutible logic and are the alchemy of our time. That the pieces are "turned on" and affected by their observers' movements further serves to personalize their mystical presence.

Playing temporal Frankenstein, the obvious irony of giving these collaged remnants a new personality via electronics, is clearly something the artist revels in. The tiny electronic orchestras producing saturnalian melodies are conceived either as complement or contrast to the character of the piece and receive the same attention as its physical form. This attitude differs from that which has accompanied the use of sophisticated technology in artwork as the result of collaboration between an artist and engineer or scientist. Typically, such a working relationship represents a compromise situation. The artist is not inherently aware of the options, limits and potential of the technology, while the engineer attempts to understand the communicative means of the artist. In this case, the problem is eliminated, as the artist has learned to understand and design circuitry in the same way a craftsman would learn the fabrication techniques of a new material.

These sculptures are interesting viewed in the context of Natalini's earlier jewelry pieces. Several years ago, Bob was making jewelry with a virtuoso use of precious and exotic materials: gold, silver, ivory and so on. These pieces often evidenced machine and space iconography. In the last few years he has produced pieces combining home-brew plastics, electronic elements and specimens from the natural world. Surprisingly, these disparate items: an iridescent beetle, a dot-matrix light-emitting diode and machined pink plastic look compatible and comfortable together. Of course, part of the conception of these pieces was that both the incredible color of the insect's armour, and the unexplainable patterns forming and reforming on a dot-matrix LED produce the same sort of wonder.

Examplary of the transition period from his earlier work to the kind of objects shown in Philadelphia is a piece which consists of a sophisticated music synthesizer contained in a cow's jawbone. This piece, which was included in the Renwick Gallery's show of musical instruments, looks like it might be used in some arcane ritual. With the construction of this piece, Natalini began to add personal input to his work in a cryptic form that included hieroglyphs, pictograms and miniature photographs. The inclusion of these elements in the work reflects a desire to take the pieces out of the context of production and to involve them with the history of their creation and the personality of their maker. The scrimshaw symbols and game board etched into the bone are a visual liturgy to accompany the wide variety of tones that are produced by the integrated circuits hiding on the underside. The camouflage, rather than display, of the electronic components shows that at this point the artist has become more interested in what the devices do rather than what they look like. That the works are hidden from sight makes their activity all the more mystical and puts the archaelogical evidence out front. Mystery is one of the key issues in this piece, and to the experienced detective the Emperor's Old Clothes show many more clues than the new ones. We are also reminded that when the curtain fell down and exposed the wizard at the controls, Oz lost some of its charm.

Page 38: Detail: A number of found objects and a pattern of holes are collaged on an oddly shaped architectural fragment. The enigmatic quality of the elements on the front implies that the piece may be concealing something on the back. When experimental head or hand gestures suddenly bring it to life with polyrhythmic chirps and cackles, these suspicions are confirmed. **A**—A peculiar audio accompanies this piece in which a flame corona surrounds a boxed and bound image. Clacking sounds of the sort one might expect to eminate from some flightless bird seem to occupy the space around the corona. The sounds are actually electronically produced but are directed and amplified by plastic tubes opening out of the sides of the piece. This odd "ventriloquist" effect serves to detach the sound from the image. **B**—A most haunting piece is this child's toy imported from the "Twilight Zone." Two bird silhouettes frame a ferris wheel of operable dolls' eyes. When an observer approaches, the wheel slowly turns to the accompaniment of an altered music-box movement. The eyes open at the 12 o'clock position, in a peculiar allusion to eternity that leaves you looking over your shoulder for Rod Serling or Vincent Price. **C**—A tarnished bird cage containing a religious painting sits atop a spiral tower of radio tubes and other items. An observer moving by the piece triggers a crazed descrescendo in direct contast to the mock seriousness and symbolism of the assemblage. Photos A, C and page 38: Michelle Frentrop. Courtesy of Works Craft Gallery. Photo B: Robert Natalini

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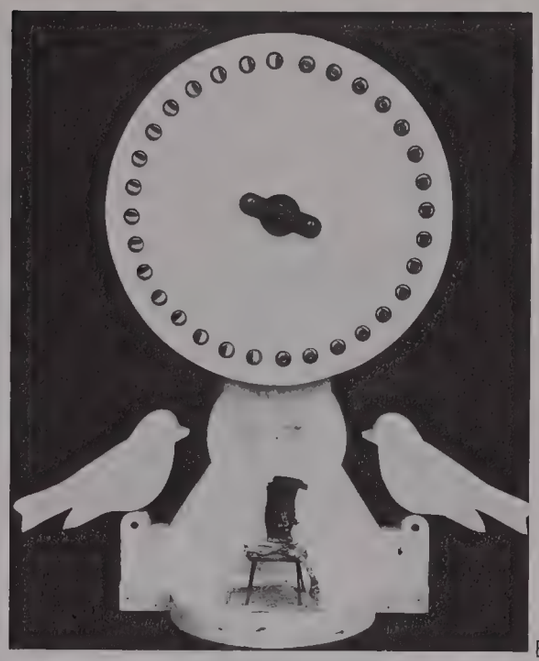
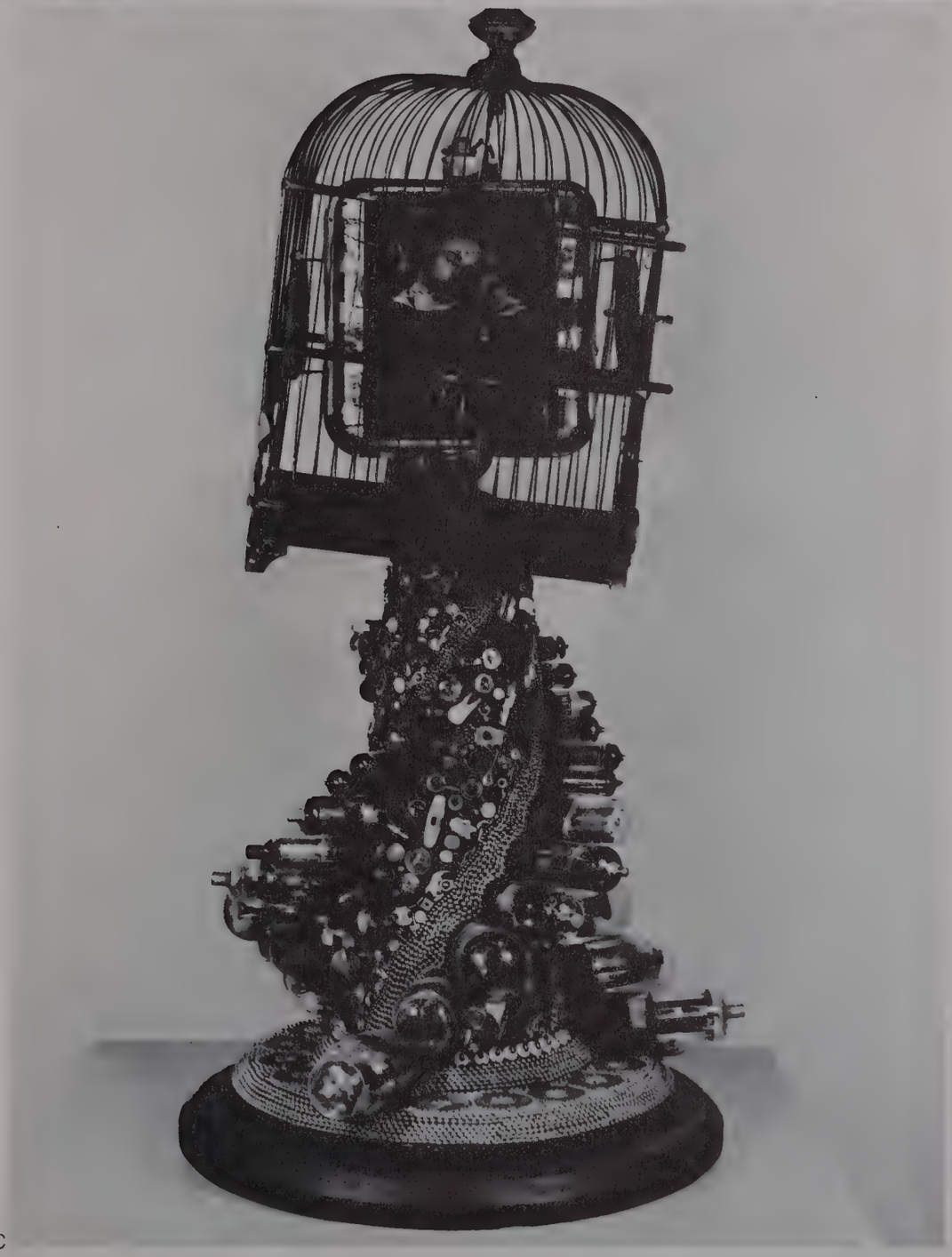
Jeffrey Hannigan is an architect and exhibition designer

A



B



C

Georg Jensen Silversmithy: A Metalworking Phenomenon

by Gretchen Raber

The "Georg Jensen Silversmithy: 77 Artists, 75 Years" exhibit at the Renwick Gallery of the National Collection of Fine Arts from February 29 through July 6, 1980 was a documentation of a significant phenomenon in the history of metalwork. The body of work displayed, consisting of 147 pieces, provides a structure for understanding the contribution of this prominent firm from its inception in 1904 up to the present. The Jensen work, through its continuity of design and technical excellence, has garnered mass appeal and exerted vast influence. In fact, it is this premise that prompted the Renwick to produce the exhibit.

That we are so familiar with the stylistic inventions and conventions of the Jensen firm is a tribute to its quality and distillation of concepts. This collaborative and collective genius was the force and importance of the Renwick show. Yet, it was this very familiarity that made it difficult as a contemporary metalsmith to respond to the show with complete intellectual excitement.

To those of us, possibly all, who have literally grown up with the name of Georg Jensen as a mark of contemporary

Georg Jensen, *Tea Machine*, design introduced 1915, hand-raised sterling silver pot and burner, chased details and ebony, 31cm h (cat. no. 67)

Right: Søren Georg Jensen, *Candelabrum*, design introduced 1959, hand raised from one piece of sterling silver, 17.6cm h (cat. no. 84)

silver design, and incidentally are metalsmiths ourselves, the show may be disquieting. It posed several questions. Has the longstanding image of the work and the ubiquitous commercial permutations of it, made it difficult to view several of the objects with fresh perspective? Is it that we are living in a time when the world metalsmithing community is of such outstanding quality that we are constantly infused with high voltage conceptual energy? Do these influences change our viewpoint of such an exhibit?

For metalsmiths, who practice individually as designer and craftsman, the exhibit presented different and important facets of the craft. The Jensen firm is situated somewhere between individual practice and what is perceived as the position of large commercial silver companies. For, although Jensen himself was a designer and a trained metalsmith, not all of the artists exhibited had been trained as metalsmiths. Therefore, technique and esthetics should be viewed separately to appreciate what generated and infused the firm of Jensen over the span of years.

What may strike those of us who marvel at the logistics of producing such a volume of work with such technical and design control is essentially that these are products of a firm, a unique firm, sophisticatedly organized, that over the last 75 years employed between 70 and 80 artists, and by the 1920s employed more than 250 on its staff. The guiding control of Georg Jensen, himself, ended with his death in 1935. Fortunately, though, the continuity of staff has been a key factor in the life of the firm.

This continuity, however, was not totally carried out in the show. Several of the objects provoked the question of the dichotomy of artistic influence and constraints of production. Occasionally, it seemed there was an inability to achieve the freshness which comes from working the material by the designer-craftsman. This was most evident in the enameled pieces and those conceived by weavers and porcelain designers.

In the case of the goldsmith Othmar Zschaler, it is possible to make a comparison between work he did for Jensen and his independent studio work. The Zschaler piece represented in the show (Cat.

No. 147), introduced in 1961, is quite "Jensenized." The shapes are smooth, stylized and heavy, The brooch bears little relationship to the essence of his personal style as seen in any of his brooches, necklaces, and other work of the '60s. Zschaler's work has a graphic quality that in many instances approaches sublime. He uses a full palette of metals, stones and surfaces.

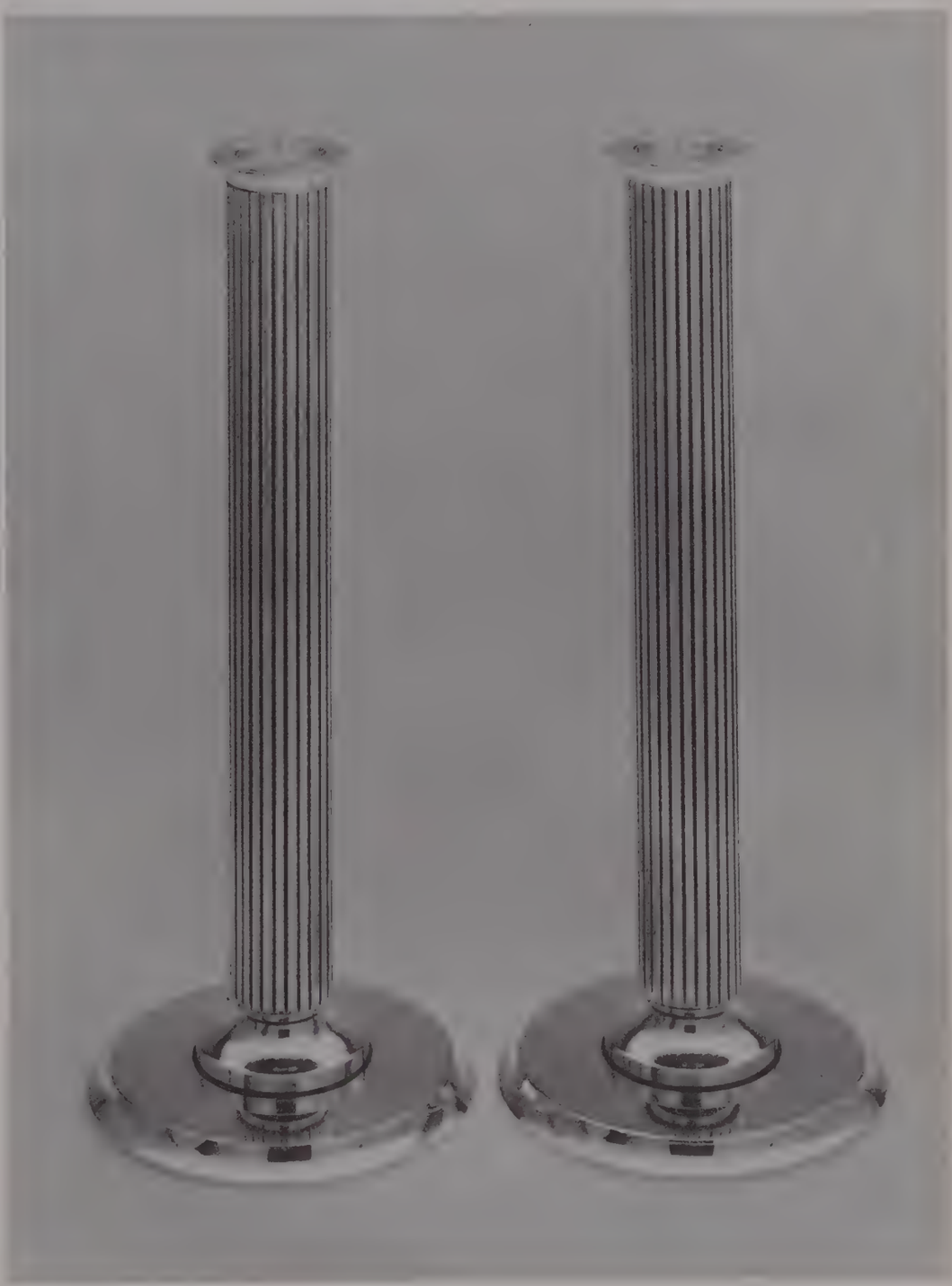
Not all the artists were well represented. Surely, including Harald Nielson's bezel-set ring (Cat. No. 115) or Andreas Mikkelsen's money clip (Cat. No. 108), or any of the cast, die-stamped or repetitiously cut link bracelets does not define an artists' contribution. Especially the minor objects in the show—the rings, buttons, pendants, brooches—exhibited little energy, even considering dates of execution. One would hope to see the best and most important of each artist's work in an exhibit propounding to be documentation. Fortunately, major design influences were well represented.

Georg Jensen: the Early Years

To understand these influences on the growth of the firm, one must seek historically the special genius of Georg Jensen, the man.

Born in 1866, Georg Jensen evidenced creative dexterity by age 14, at which time he was apprenticed to a goldsmith in Copenhagen. After only four years he qualified as journeyman! While he supported himself as a goldsmith, he continued training in drawing, engraving and modeling at one of the local technical schools. This artistic education formed part of the intellectual infusion Jensen brought to his craft and which remained a continual concern. Frequently, events in one's life lead in directions not of initial choice. Georg Jensen's very normal need to support his family led him further away from his first love, sculpture. The eventual break to become an independent silversmith came when he was almost 40. "Pressures of circumstance," wrote Jensen in his memoirs, "forces me to take up my old craft."

An important contact at this period of Jensen's transition was Mogens Ballin. Ballin's work evidenced many of the stylized and amorphic natural forms that have in-



Left: Henning Koppel, *Tea Pot*, design introduced 1954, spun and raised sterling silver with handcut ivory, 11.8cm h (cat. no. 90)

Top: Kristan Møhl-Jansen, *Cup*, design introduced 1916, hand-raised and chased sterling silver, mounted with amber, 6.6cm h x 10cm d (cat. no. 109)
Above: Georg Jensen, *Cane Handle*, design introduced 1919, hand-raised, chased and shaped sterling silver with green agate, approx. 11cm (cat. no. 80)

Right: Sigvard Bernadotte, *Candlesticks*, design introduced 1938, spun, soldered and hand-engraved sterling silver, 25cm h (cat. no. 14)

fluenced contemporary Danish jewelery. Also significant to Jensen was his meeting with Johan Rohde through Ballin. The silver jewelery Jensen produced at this early stage represented a refinement of stylistic influences. These were derived in part from his exposure to Art Nouveau in Paris in 1900, the work of René Lalique, his youthful interest in natural forms and, importantly, the Scandanavian design heritage of curvilinear, intertwining animal and plant motifs taken from Viking ornamentation on functional objects. This synthesis of influences, combined with the expressive and intuitive handling of the metal, energized Georg Jensen's early work.

Included in Jensen's early work at the Renwick were a variety of objects: a tray, a candelabrum, a tea machine, a ladel, cutlery, jewelery, containers and a cane handle. One of the most extraordinary was the tea machine, a meticulously raised pot of sterling, softly beehive shaped and ornamented with a chased floral-motif handle. This piece, as with other older pieces, is weightier with excellent balance and is quite elegant to handle. In the early 1900s, even when a piece was small, heavy-gauge metal was used. The later work, possibly due to the rise in the price of metal, was made with lighter gauges. In all cases, the pieces were streamlined, flowing, elegant and well engineered.

Several motifs and variations appear throughout the work of Georg Jensen. The raised hive shape of the "tea machine" pot can be traced to an earlier 1905 teapot (Cat. No. 62), which, in contrast, was spun and then planished. This earlier pot also incorporated the famous sculptured Jensen blossom decoration and beading, which were direct progenitors of his cutlery pattern in 1919 (Cat. No. 71). A further lasting influence is reflected in a hair comb (Cat. No. 77). The use of semiprecious stones with curvilinear oxidized forms became a tradition of the firm. A 1919 cane handle (Cat. No. 80) exhibits the sculptural thread which is part of the legacy of Georg Jensen. It is hand raised, chased and shaped.

Ole Kortzau, *Vase*, design introduced 1979, hand-chased and sculpted sterling silver, approx. 30x19.5x14.5cm (cat. no. 99)

The Jensen Staff

In addition to his great talent, Georg Jensen had the vision to put together a very talented staff of proficient craftsmen and artists, many of whom stayed with the firm over the years.

The designer Johan Rohde entered the firm formally in 1917, cementing an already growing relationship between himself and Jensen, which was to become a lifetime association. Johan Rohde was among the foremost of the artist-craftsmen who contributed to what would become the mark of the Jensen style. His acorn cutlery pattern introduced in 1915 is still produced today. His candlestick (Cat. No. 126), a column of raised, hammered sterling, shows evidence of a refinement of form. A repetition of edges and beading on the candlestick, though not innovative, shows Rohde's special transitional influence. As a catalyst for the design in early firm work, his box for cards and chips (1926) is superbly realized, simple and elegant, little diminished by obvious firescale discoloration. An earlier piece, a sugar caster (Cat. No. 127) relates well stylistically to the card box.

Harald Nielsen exerted exceptional and sustained influence in the firm and was largely responsible for the consolidation of the Jensen style. He remained wedded to the concept of ornament as a decorative finish of form. In contrast to Jensen and Rohde, his pieces evidenced more stylized natural forms. The Renwick catalog notes that "Much of the work that bears Georg Jensen's and Johan Rohde's names was in fact executed after rough sketches and prepared for production by Harald Nielsen." He assumed leadership of the design side of the firm after World War II. The Nielsen candlestick (Cat. Pg. 16), one of the strongest early pieces, is heavy-guage sterling, forged, sculpted and chased.

After World War II, Jensen's sons, Søren and Jorgen, joined the firm and contributed

Georg Jensen, *Sugar Caster*, design introduced 1912, raised and chased sterling silver, top, center and base with drilled and cut motifs, 19cm h (cat. no. 66)

sound artistic and technical training that further shaped the image. Søren's hand-raised candlebrum represents the direction toward antiseptic paring down.

The most important major shift in style resulted when the artist Sigvard Bernadotte, son of the King of Sweden, joined Jensen in 1930. Swedish design influences of Bernadotte in collaboration with P. A. Pedersen the engineer and general manager of the Smithy, forged a new direction. Significant were Bernadotte's geometric and linear elements, much in tune with the Art Moderne tastes of the contemporary markets of the times. The technically pristine carving fork, knife and spoon (Cat. No. 11) were made from two cast sterling pieces which appear to be lathe finished and soldered together. The design element of inverted flutes reverses in a pair of candlesticks. Spun bases are soldered to columns that are defined by long vertical hand-engraved flutes, which are both beautiful and technically impressive.

One of the most eminent artists to be attached to Georg Jensen is Henning Koppel, who joined Jensen after World War II at age 27. It is his work, with great support from Harald Nielsen, that to the majority of us defines modern silver. Koppel, the master draftsman, executed such landmark pieces as the 1950 bowl (Cat. Pg. 19), with its sweeping, soaring line and smoothly amorphic foot. His jewelery also reflects these elements. In fact, these elements have been so persuasive that they invaded commercial jewelery manufacture at the time and still show stubborn resiliency. Most significant, his holloware: a bowl, (Cat. Pg. 19) a pitcher (Cat. No. 88), a teapot (Cat. No. 90) are lyrically simple silver. An extension of this concept is his dish with cover (Cat. No. 89), a hand-raised pod. It is the most visually liquid form of metal conceivable. All of his work represented in the Renwick show has an antiseptically perfect line, coupled with superb craftsmanship. Spun forms fit with precision, handles and inlays of nonmetal parts are impeccable. My particular favorite was a forged-steel carving fork and knife (Cat. 97), which embodied simplicity in the refinement and essence of function.

Another of the exceedingly strong contributors Magnus Stephensen is an architect, designer and has been an associate of the firm since 1950. His 1957 teapot and water jug (Cat. No. 141) in stainless steel appears to be spun into two precisely fitting containers, one nesting on the other to form a lid. The piece is a perfectly seamed and fitted handled container that uses the mechanical and technical to achieve a resolution of form. This was the nascent quality of Georg Jensen.

Jensen's Appeal Today

If you are interested in concealed snap clasps integrated with necklaces and bracelets, or double-tube concealed hinges, essentially clean seams, continuous line chasing, perfectly templated raised form, spun forms of superb control, examine works from the Jensen firm.

However, if your concern is with the most contemporary energies and concepts, turn to the United States or to the major designer-craftsmen of Germany, Holland, Austria and England. What was germaine to the Georg Jensen exhibit, presented beautifully by the Renwick Gallery, was the expansion of our awareness of the chronological, esthetic, technical and organizational contributions of a man and his legacy. A legacy of style that is classic and which has in the most expressive and important sense, taste.

Gretchen Raber is Assistant Professor of Metalwork at Catholic University and past President of the Washington Guild of Goldsmiths

A catalog of the Georg Jensen exhibit is available ($9.95 softbound, $20.00 hardbound), published by the Smithsonian Institution Press. It includes an essay by Eric Lassen, Director of the Danish Museum of Decorative Art and an introduction by Lloyd Herman, Director of the Renwick Gallery.

Issues:
Establishing a Craft Gallery

Prime Canadian Crafts, Toronto, Canada

Suzann Greenaway opened Prime Canadian Crafts a little over a year ago with the firm conviction that if she could show high-quality crafts in an attractive setting that would educate and enlighten the consumer, she would succeed. And she has. Her gallery is thriving proof that you can bring something new to the public and they will not only appreciate, but they will also buy. Suzann talked to *Metalsmith* one afternoon about the nuts and bolts of running a gallery—how she began, how she operates and her future goals.

"I always had a strong interest in crafts, but I also knew that it would not be a profession for me. I had studied pottery and some fiber, and prior to opening the gallery I had held jobs with the Canadian Guild of Potters and then the Ontario Potter's Association, all of which gave me a tremendous knowledge about who was working in what crafts and where. The intent to open my own business became very clear, and in June of 1979 I began the search for a gallery space. I knew I wanted to be on Queen Street; it is just beginning to develop as an area filled with trendy restaurants and galleries and interesting stores, and the rents are still cheaper than uptown. I found suitable space for August, so I spent July making all the phone calls necessary to begin to operate. My husband and I did all the renovations, except for the very technical parts, and, again, I knew what I wanted—a clean, white, uncluttered, well lit and flexible space that would show off the crafts, and not vice-versa. The displays had to be as suitable for baskets as for large sculptural pieces. Display cases would hang on the walls, and a group of specially lit tables would show metal and small pieces."

"Several decisions about who and what to show came easily. For one, I decided to show only Canadian artists. Dexterity, the gallery that is my closest competition, shows both Canadian and American artists, but I felt that I wanted to show the best, and there is too much competition for the top Americans. Also, many are too expensive for the audience here, which is just beginning to know fine crafts. I also knew that I was only interest in one-of-a-kind decorative work, not production, and not student work, so this automatically eliminated many craftsmen. The first show would be a group of the artists I eventually wanted to represent. I knew I wanted a good range of pottery and ceramics, fiber, metal, glass and basketry. Most of the artists I contacted were pleased, and only a few too busy to

be a part of the gallery (some of these have since joined, however). The first show opened on the 13th of September (a prime number) and from then until Christmas I concentrated on introducing my artists to Toronto. In January, I did a show of traditional baskets, which was a great success and I discovered that a lot of people have serious basket collections. At the present time I am alternating six-week long group shows with two-week one-person or special shows."

"An overwhelming number of people send in slides of their work, resumes or letters of inquiry. Many also come into the gallery and ask if I want to see work. I usually use instincts to guide me on whether or not to set up a meeting. If possible, I will go to the studio to see work, but artists from out of town often end up mailing me some samples. I act primarily on what I personally like and strive to simply show the best within the limits of the gallery (some fiber, for example, is just too big for the gallery space). I also never take on a new artist unless I want to do a one-person show of his work. When I do take on a new artist, which has been frequent during the first year of operation, I try to buy outright for gallery stock. The craftsman sets the retail price and I buy at 50% of that, net 30 days from the date of sale. I pay at the end of the month in which the piece sells because I don't believe that people should have to wait for their money, but I'm told that this is unusual."

"Having a one-man show is expensive, and here I split the costs of such a show with the craftsman. The work is taken on consignment at 60/40. Invitations to the opening cost about $200 for printing and $85 for postage. I usually have about 1,000 invitations printed in black and white showing a picture of a typical piece and giving some information about the opening, the gallery and so on. For the opening I get a temporary liquor license, rent glasses, buy cheese and crackers or whatever. In all, costs usually run about $600. I absorb the costs of advertising, because I feel it benefits me as well as the artist. This usually consists of a $100 ad in the newspaper art page and $300 in ads in the two Toronto magazines that list upcoming events. Every once in a while I will put an ad in the larger art magazine, but this is expensive, so I choose carefully when and how. I find that people do come into the gallery as a result of seeing these ads, however."

"A lot of my time is spent on publicity and press releases. I make a press kit for each show, that consists of photos taken by a professional photographer, resumes, previous press clippings and any other information that is pertinent. These cost about $300 to prepare, not including labor. In January, I prepare a listing of the upcoming shows for the year and send this to all the publications along with a cover letter. A simpler press release goes to the monthly and weekly listings columns. I have a special kit for craft writers and one for TV and radio. They are obligated to give some free time to art and craft listings, and each month I get back a letter stating they have used my blurb x-number of times, thank you very much. In the past I have tried to get more coverage in the art press, but this has proven fruitless, so of late I have switched my concentration to having critics begin a special section of the newspaper for crafts. I also keep an up-to-date portfolio of gallery artists' bios, photos of their work, information on past shows and press clippings. This serves two purposes. It gives me a concrete record of the gallery and it also provides something I can send to craftsmen in other parts of Canada who might be hesitant to send work because they are unfamiliar with Prime or what it has done. I also felt very strongly that Prime should have a well-designed logo and stationary. People send me beautiful things to look at, and I feel the least I can do is send them back a nice piece of paper. My designer is a friend who designs for the Art Gallery of Ontario, and I pay her the going hourly rate. On some occasions we will also trade, but this gets complicated. The mailing list now numbers about 600, mostly clients. I keep a good record of who buys what and periodically weed the list of nonbuyers."

"Essentially, the gallery began with my own money, but it fast became self-sufficient. My accountant is amazed, because generally it takes at least three years to do what Prime has done in just a year. Expenses are minimal: rent, utilities, insurance and salary for some part-time workers. I do not take a salary, but as a sole proprietor I must pay taxes on all profits, whether salary or inventory, so it works out. Most profits, therefore, go back into inventory."

"I look for new artists by reading all the publications, looking carefully at the work that is sent in to me and also doing some traveling. Word of mouth is very important. Craftsmen tell me about other people they think I might like, and I'll follow up on those leads. I am not afraid of my own judgement, and I am not afraid to take on an artist even if the work will not sell immediately. Also, I will never ask an artist to repeat an item. Instead, I encourage the customer to understand personal development in the work. A good deal of time is spent educating my customers, and this is proving worthwhile, because they are coming back to buy something else that might be slightly more sophisticated or expensive. I have a few commercial customers—designers or art consultants—and I also serve as a consultant to those trying to build a collection. I take a finder's fee for putting a customer in touch with an artist for a special project. Textiles, especially, often work this way. I will also let a customer take a piece home for a few days to see if it really is appropriate for their space. Because I think crafts are a bargain right now, I don't give discounts at all."

"My goals are several. I would like to have a larger space, naturally, or to eventually open a wearables gallery that would combine metal and fiber. It would be fun, and good publicity, to lend adventurous pieces to fashion shows and magazines. I find, especially in metal, that the more spectacular work sells better than the production pieces, so this is the direction that will continue. I'd also like to be able to do one special show after another rather than intersperse the group shows with individual ones."

"My advice to artists is simple: first make the decision to show, not to sell. Don't compromise your work and design for the masses, because eventually the masses will catch up with you and you will sell. Promote youself, because if you don't believe in yourself you cannot expect others to believe in you or your work. Expect several years of poverty, but also expect to succeed."

Suzann feels that Prime Canadian Crafts is unique, not just to Toronto, but to all of Canada. Her knowledgable and serene presence encourages both buyers and craftsmen to give and obtain the best in any particular field. Shows such as Edouard Jasmin's recent folk art from Montreal and a collection of unusual masks (for Halloween wearing) are special ways she brings freshness and originality to the crafts in Canada.

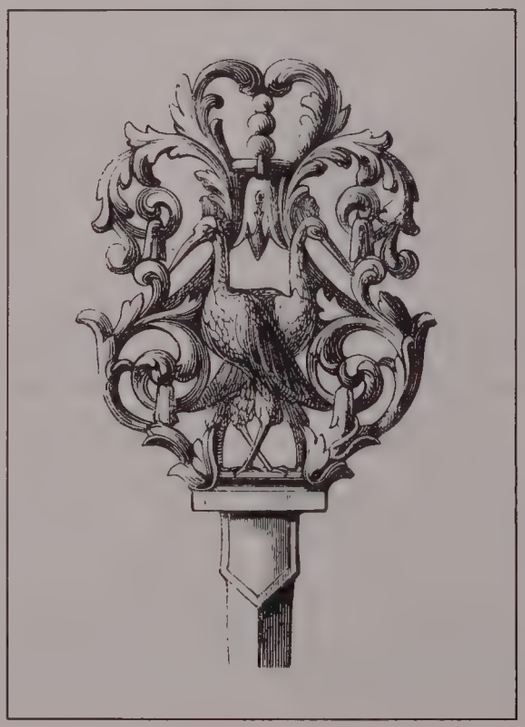
Jennifer Place / freelance editor and writer

A Metalsmith's Guide to London

by Marilyn Davidson

This is the first in a series of metalsmith's guides to cities, regions and museums throughout the world. The purpose of these guides is to help metalsmiths discover the history and tradition of their craft by introducing them to the treasures and resources, both hidden and accessible, of a certain place.

Metalsmith *magazine encourages contributions to this series. The guides should focus on a single location and be illustrated with maps, line drawings and photographs whenever possible. No place or piece is too remote or insignificant to mention—an exquisite bronze bust in a hotel lobby, a certain iron grill in New Orleans, knives in a fishing tackle store. Here is a chance to share your favorite places and works with others. Send submissions to: Sarah Bodine, Managing Editor, Metalsmith, 35 West 84th Street, New York, NY 10024.*



Travel, with its inherent visual and intellectual stimulation, is somewhere on every artist's list of priorities. For American metalsmiths the treasures of its great museums and collections are a major incentive to visit London. The Victoria and Albert Museum houses perhaps the world's greatest collection of decorative arts and the British Museum contains the artifacts and esthetic achievements of many of the great ancient civilizations. London offers fascinating auction houses and antique shops of the highest quality where fine metal objects and jewels can be seen and handled and contemporary galleries where the most recent metalwork can be found. In the jewelers' district there are numerous shops offering quality European tools, precious gems and metals. Five major art colleges with well-known programs in silversmithing and jewelry have studios in the city, and, of course monumental Goldsmiths Hall makes its imposing home in London, as well. The City of London has a great variety of experiences to offer every visitor, and the list of places and descriptions that follows is intended as a very specific but limited guide. The information about theaters, galleries and other urban pleasures are readily available elsewhere. It is certainly to be hoped that the metalsmith will have enough energy remaining from hours of field research to experience some of London's other delights.

Goldsmith's Hall, drawn by the architect Philip Hardwick in 1835. Even after the last war bombing, the exterior is identical today. Photo courtesy of *The Worshipful Company of Goldsmiths*

Other illustrations from *The Crystal Palace Exhibition Illustrated Catalogue* published by the *Dover Pictorial Archive Series.*

Highlights of Major Museums' Metal Collections

Goldsmiths Hall
Foster Lane, WC2, tel: 606-8971. Goldsmiths Hall holds periodic exhibitions of jewelry and silversmithing that are open to the public. When there are no exhibitions on display, entrance to the Hall is by appointment only. An advance call is also needed to browse in the fine library. The assaying rooms are also located on the premises. The technical department is willing to provide technical information when available. There is always a display of metalwork from the permanent collection on view in the main entry hall.

The Victoria and Albert Museum
Cromwell Road SW7, tel: 589-6371—open 10–6 daily, 2:30–5:30 Sunday, closed Friday, free, photography permitted. The museum is enormous and complex. Exhibitions are not always divided along media lines, so important metalwork is scattered throughout the rooms. The jewelry department has been closed for about two years for reconstruction, but is scheduled to reopen in the fall of 1980 with a show of Renaissance jewelry. The room locations of major clusters of metal objects are described below. Floor plan maps showing room numbers are available at the Museum.

Lower Ground Floor—Continental Galleries
Rooms 1A and C: German, Northern European silver, boxes, Limoges enamels. *Room 2:* 17th c. German, Northern Baroque silver. *Room 3:* 17 c. French and Flemish metalwork. *Rooms 6 and 7:* 18th c. goldsmith's work

Ground Floor
Rooms 21, 21A: High Renaissance Spanish and Italian metalwork, small bronzes. *Rooms 24, 25:* English metalwork, Spanish metalwork and enameling of the Gothic period. *Rooms 26, 27, 29:* Renaissance Northern European metalwork. *Room 41:* Indian Mughal arts, 16th–19th c. jade, metal objects, jewelry. *Room 42:* Persian damascene and bronze. *Room 43:* Early middle ages ivory, gold, enamels, bronzes. *Rooms 44, 47D, 47E:* Chinese and Japanese bronzes, jades, enamels, lacquerware. *Rooms 47A, 47B:* Balinese, Javanese, Tibetan, Burmese, Indian metalwork

Upper Ground Floor
Room 52: Tudor gold plates, clocks, knives. *Room 55:* Enamel portrait miniatures, silver toilet services. *Room 57:* Georgian silver. *Room 64:* Small 16th c. Italian bronzes

First Floor—Jewelry and Metalwork Department.
Rooms 65–67: English domestic silver 14th–20th c. *Rooms 68–69:* Continental domestic silver. *Room 81:* Pewter and lead, cutlery, steelwork. *Room 82:* 17th–18th c. European brass and copper, Sheffield plate. *Rooms 83–84:* Ecclesiastical silver, brasses. *Rooms 88A and 90:* Arms and armour of Europe and Near East. *Rooms 91–92:* Rings, jewels. *Room 93:* English and Continental snuff boxes, watches. *Rooms 113–115:* Wrought-iron gates, signs, weather vanes, grates, locks

Upper First Floor
Room 123: 18th c. silver. *Room 129:* Chinese jades, gemstone carvings, snuff bottles, painted enamels

Second Floor
Room 138: Grisaille, Limoges enamels. *Room 145:* Painted enamels

The British Museum
Great Russel St., WC1, tel: 636-1555—open 10–5 daily, 2:30–6 Sunday, free, photography permitted

Ground Floor
Bronze Age Room 2: Bronze and gold figures. *Early Greek Room 3:* Small bronzes, fibulas. *The Harpy Tomb Room 5:* Small bronzes. *Etruscan Mezzanine Room 11:* Bronzes and granulated gold. *Hellenistic Room 13:* Gold jewelry. *First Roman Room 14:* Jewels, silver and bronzes

Upper Floor
Anatolian and Iranian Rooms 51, 52: The Oxus Treasure, bronzes, arms and armour, gold objects, jewelry. *Sumerian and Babylonian Room 54:* Headdresses with gold leaves, gold objects. *Egyptian Galleries Rooms 60–65:* Domestic objects, jewelry. *Terracottas and Bronzes Room 68:* Greek, Etruscan and Roman bronzes. *Greek and Roman Life Room 69:* Minoan, Mycenaean, Etruscan and Greek jewelry. *Central Saloon and Prehistory Rooms 36–39:* 2000 BC – 1AD pre-Roman metalwork, shields, helmets, arms, Celtic gold. *Roman Britain Room 40:* 1st–4th c. AD metal objects, Mildenhall Treasure. *Early Mediaeval and Mediaeval Rooms 41–42:* Sutton Hoo Treasure, Anglo-Saxon plate, weapons, jewels. *Horological Room 44:* Clocks, watches. *Waddesdon Bequest Room 45:* Renaissance jewels, plate, enamels, objects, bronzes. *Renaissance and Later Corridor Room 46:* Metal objects, silver, enamels. *The Grundy Gift Room 47:* Recent bequest of a cross-section of jewelry from many periods.

The Oriental Antiquities
Galleries I (located between the Ground and Upper Floors): Tibetan and Nepalese jewels and metalwork, Islamic metalwork, Chinese jewelry, enamels and snuff bottles, Japanese netsukes, sword mountings and ojime

The Wallace Collection and The Tower of London

There are two major collections of arms and armour in the city and both contain masterpieces of metalwork from numerous cultures and periods. The finest inlay, carving, gemstones and engraving lavished on these metal objects will fascinate even those without any love of weapons.

The Wallace Collection *Hertford House, Manchester Square, W1, tel: 935-0687—open 10–5 Monday– Saturday, 2–5 Sunday, free.* There is also a collection of 89 minature gold boxes on display here.

The Tower of London *Armouries in the White Tower at Tower Bridge on the Thames—March–October open 9:30–5 daily, 2–5 Sunday; November–April open 9:30–4 daily, closed Sunday, admission charge.* The crown jewels.

Museum of Mankind *6 Burlington Gardens, tel: 437-2224—open 10–5 daily, 2:30–6 Sunday, free.* The British Museum's ethnography department exhibits its collection of tribal arts at the Museum of Mankind in rotating displays.

The Museum of London *London Wall EC2, tel: 600-3699—open 10–6 Tuesday– Saturday, 2–6 Sunday.* Contains the history of the city in artifacts from its earliest days to the present. This includes the Cheapside Hoard of Elizabethan jewelry and early Roman metalworking tools. Also here is a small contemporary jewelry sales area sponsored by nearby Goldsmiths Hall.

Science Museum *Exhibition Road SW7, tel: 589-3456—open 10–5:45 daily, 2:30–5:45 Sunday, free.* The museum has permanent exhibitions tracing the development of hand and machine tools and iron and steel smelting on the first floor. Throughout are interesting scientific instruments and machinery.

Craft Shops, Galleries and Stores

The first two on this list are the most important public craft galleries in London, showing the work of individual craftsmen or exhibitions along theme or media lines.

The Crafts Council Gallery *12 Waterloo Place SW1, tel: 839-1917—open 10–5 Monday–Saturday.* Also has an excellent slide library of members' work.

The British Crafts Centre *43 Earlham Street WC2, tel: 836-6993—open 10–5:30 Monday–Friday, 10–4 Saturday*

The Victoria and Albert Museum Craft Shop *located in the main hall.* This shop always shows the work of a variety of British craftsmen.

Electrum Gallery *21 South Molton Street W1, tel: 629-6325—open 10–6 Monday–Friday, 10–1 Saturday.* One of Europe's most prestigious contemporary art-jewelry galleries.

Studio Gallery *8 Garrick Street WC2, tel: 836-7291.* This is a working studio for several craftsmen as well as a small jewelry gallery.

Argenta Gallery *82 Fulham Road SW3, tel: 584-3119.* This shop has much production work but also one-off pieces by well-known jewelers downstairs.

Andrew Grima *80 Jermyn Street SW1, tel: 839-7561.* This glamorous shop has many one-of-a-kind pieces designed by Britain's high-fashion jewelers. Workshops are on the premises.

Asprey's *165 New Bond Street W1, tel: 493-6767 and Garrard, 112 Regent Street W1, tel: 734-7020.* These two shops are London's most venerated traditional gold and silversmiths.

Liberty's *210–220 Regent Street W1, tel: 734-1234.* The area devoted to antique jewelry here is filled with unique pieces.

Auction Houses

The great auction houses publish their projected sales in newspapers and weekly magazines, like the *London Times, What's On in London* and *Time Out.* The collections can be examined for days prior to the sales and catalogs are available for purchase.

Christie's *8 King Street, St. James SW1, tel: 839-9060.*

Christie's South Kensington *85 Old Brompton Road SW7, tel: 581-2231.*

Bonham and Sons *Montpelier Street SW7, tel: 584-9161.*

Phillips *7 Blenheim Street SW1, tel: 629-6602.*

Sotheby Parke Bernet *34/35 New Bond Street W1, tel: 493-8080.*

Sotheby's Belgravia *19 Motcomb Street SW1, tel: 235-4311.*

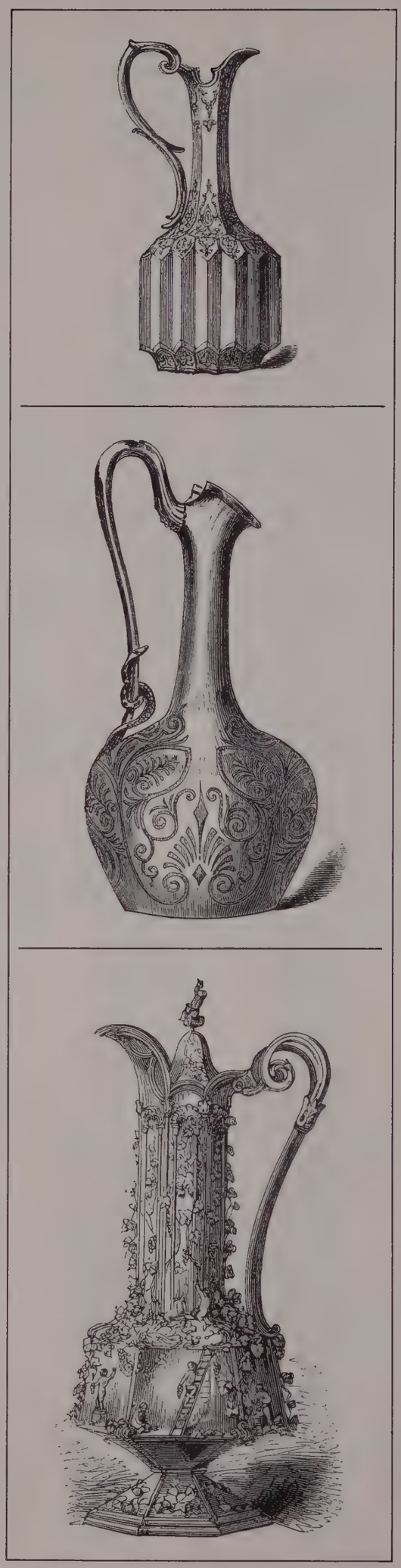
Antique Galleries

The following antique marts are very large, containing dozens of separate stalls. Their goods are of very high quality with prices that correspond.

Chenil Gallery *181 Kings Road, Chelsea SW3, tel: 352-2123.*

Chelsea Antique Mart *253/254A Kings Road SW3, tel: 352-9695.*

Gray's Antiques *Davies Street (corner South Molton Lane).*



Outdoor Antique Marts

The following outdoor marts operate only on specific days, and it is necessary to go early in the day.

Bermondsey/New Caledonia Market *between Tower Bridge Road and Bermondsey Street SE1, Fridays only.*

Portobello Road Market *between Chepstow Villas and Colville Terrace W11, Saturdays only.*

Hatton Garden—Jewelers District for Tools and Supplies

Hatton Garden and its crossroads, like Greville and Hatton Wall, are home to dozens of small retail jewelers and manufacturers as well as refiners, gem, tool and findings merchants. Some shops have minimum orders and none will sell to visitors at wholesale. Value Added Tax (VAT) is customarily charged (15%) on all materials, supplies and tools.

R. Holt and Co. Ltd. *111 Hatton Garden EC1, tel: 405-5286.* Unusual and one-of-a-kind gems.

Frank Pike, *58G Hatton Garden EC1, tel: 405-2688.* Tools.

Charles Cooper *23/27 Hatton Wall EC1, tel: 278-8167.* Tools, machinery, findings, solders.

C. V. Salvo *88 Hatton Garden EC1, tel: 405-7445.* Tools.

A. S. Walsh and Son *12–16 Clerkenwell Road EC1, tel: 253-1174.* Tools and machinery.

Johnson-Matthey Metals Ltd. *43 Hatton Garden EC1, tel: 405-6959.* Refiners.

J. Blundell and Sons Ltd. *199 Wardour Street W1, tel: 437-4746.* Refiners, findings. This shop is not in the Hatton Garden area, but near the Picadilly Circus tube stop.

Schools

The metal programs in the London Art Colleges each have their own areas of emphasis and special flavor. They welcome visitors cordially but an advance call and appointment are necessary.

Camberwell School of Art and Crafts *Peckham Road SE5, tel: 703-0987.* The program here is dedicated to silversmithing with some occasional blacksmithing. Lawrence Sparey—Head of Department.

Central School of Art and Design *Southampton Road WC1, tel: 405-1825.* Jewelry program only. Brian Wood—Head of Department.

City of London Polytechnic, Sir John Cass School of Art *White Chapel High Street E1, tel: 283-1030.* This school teaches a broad range of metalworking skills and is also closely allied with the trade. Alfred Ward—Head of Department.

Middlesex Polytechnic at Cat Hill *Cockfosters, East Barnet EN4, tel: 440-7431.* Both silversmithing and jewelry are taught here. Keith Redfirn—Head of Department.

Royal College of Art *Kensington Gore SW7, tel: 584-5020.* Silversmithing and jewelry taught only on the graduate level. Phillip Popham—Head of Department.

Marilyn Davidson is an American jeweler currently living in London

Reviews

Metalsmith publishes reviews of important exhibitions of metalwork and encourages voluntary submission of such reviews. A critical assessment of the work shown, as opposed to description only, is preferred. High-quality black-and-white photographs of pieces discussed in the review, with full captions, are imperative.

Please write for contributor's guidelines and deadlines for submission to: Sarah Bodine, Managing Editor, Metalsmith, 35 West 84th Street, New York, NY 10024.

Everyday Metal
National Ornamental Metal Museum, Memphis Tennessee
October 15–January 6, 1980
Rowe Gallery, University of North Carolina at Charlotte
February 1980
by Anne Taussig

To thwart the steady encroachment of the slicer-dicer-vegematic mentality is no easier task for the metalsmith than it is for Julia Child, but the *Everyday Metal* exhibition showed that the tradition of unique handmade kitchenware is still alive and well.

Artists were asked to submit objects created for the preparation, cooking and serving of food. Though some very fine work was exhibited, few interpreted the invitation with a breadth of imagination equal to the breadth of the topic. Not to put down knives and spoons in one fell swoop!

Where fantasy was blended with the utensil's function, some of the best work evolved. Beverly Sahn's "Ode to Hans Brinker," was an iceskate turned kitchen tool. James Goehrung's "Salt Cellar," a tiny fruit cellar, complete with double doors, steps and bricks, provided a tiny shovel to scoop up salt. These double entendres showed a refreshing playfulness on the part of the designers.

A turn-of-the-century playhouse stove, with its matching children's kitchen set, and a cast-iron salesman's sample stove set the stage for the whole exhibit. The clever juxtaposition of contemporary ironwork with these stoves and 18th- and 19th-century English and American pieces pointed up the influence of historical work. Though a certain rustic simplicity bridged the historical and contemporary work, the latter did not stop there. The gargoyle look of the chiseled rams' heads on Toby Hickman's "Pot Rack" and the microcosm of etched symbols in Gary Noffke's steel and plastic food chopper imbued each piece with personal imagery uncommon in historical work.

Additionally, Noffke's knubby-handled "Food Chopper" and his truncated "Spatula" blades seemed to embody a very individual cooking method. That kind of improvement on the simplistic, cost-effective designing of commercial kitchenware through personalization appeared in other pieces, too, in subtle ways. The grace of Jan Loyd's steel spatula lay in the intricate piercing of the blade, but it was the crook in the arm that indicated she understands the awkward wrist-bending commercial spatulas require. Like Noffke, she improved on design elements essential to function.

Some would attribute the disparity of styles evident in this exhibition to a lack of direction in contemporary metalwork. However, the search for stylistic trends has become too relentless a pursuit, an end in itself. The exploration of style—the primitive, the historical, the romantic, the humorous, the constructivist—all evidenced in this show, is less a floundering about of contemporary metalwork than it is testimony to the diversity of attitude and politics among the artists. Style is a careful blending of concept and personal perspective. Integrity is not to be found in a melting pot.

An illustrated catalog of this exhibition is available from the National Ornamental Metal Museum, 374 West California, Memphis, TN 38106.

Top: Peter O'Shaughnessy, *Wall Pot Rack*, wrought iron, 1979. Photo: David Ramsey

Center: Jan Brooks Loyd, *Spatula*, mild steel, silver and wood

Bottom: James Goehrung, *Salt Cellar*, sterling silver and birch

Chinese Cloisonné: the Clague Collection
Phoenix Art Museum, Phoenix, Arizona
March 14–April 20, 1980
by Susan Benforado

Not since 1912 has an American museum mounted a major exhibition of Chinese cloisonné and published a scholarly catalog to accompany it.

"Chinese Cloisonné: the Clague Collection" as shown at the Phoenix Art Museum contained 79 pieces or sets of cloisonné, 102 works in all, loaned by Robert and Marian Clague of Sun City, Arizona. Although there are several extensive collections of Oriental cloisonné in the United States, most contain examples of both Japanese and Chinese cloisonné and consist largely of 19th- and 20th-century pieces. The Clague Collection is unusual in its restriction to Chinese cloisonné and in its range from the 16th through the 19th centuries; it is distinctive in its consistently high quality. If the collection has a weakness, it rests in its lack of 15th-century work, so praised and so prized. Given the paucity of 15th-century work in this country, however—two works, in different museums—this is an understandable deficiency, and one which may be eliminated in the future as the Clagues continue to collect.

Historically, collectors have valued cloisonné enamels for their beauty, combining as they do the glitter of polished metal with the luster of the primary colors, while craftsmen have wrestled with their technical difficulties. The bond between enamel and metal is subject to myriad stresses, once achieved, and at least one historian of the medium, Sir Harry Garner, has suggested that it took every ray of cloisonné's brilliance to compensate the ancient craftsman in his toil.

One of the oldest methods of enameling, cloisonné seems to have possessed certain advantages over its coeval, champlevé, in that the rigid armature of cloisons helped solve the persistent problem of smooth support for the enamel, once applied. The earliest known examples of cloisonné date from 12-century Cyprus, roughly contemporary Scythia, and archaic Greece, with

important bodies of work surviving from Celtic Europe, pre-Conquest Britain, Byzantium and the Arab world. Curiously, cloisonné did not develop independently in China; rather, it was imported from either Byzantium or Arabia, probably during the 14th century, when China's borders were relatively fluid. It was thereupon assmilated, improved upon and made China's own to such an extent that in the modern West the phrase "cloisonné enamel" is virtually synonymous with "Chinese cloisonné enamel."

Cloisonné's reputaon has always been higher outside China than inside, perhaps because of its foreign origin (for a time in China, it was referred to as Gue Guo Yao, or "ware of the devil's country"), perhaps because crafts in general rank low in China, far beneath the high arts of painting and calligraphy. Shortly after its introduction into China, it became a profitable export business, a position it retains in present-day China, although certainly not at the level it attained during the Ch'ing dynasty (1644–1912), when, for the first time, cloisonné was produced under imperial supervision. A distinct sense of majesty attaches to each piece in the Phoenix Art Museum exhibition; whether the works possess a connection with the imperial factory or not, their technical excellence and artistic presence manifest themselves throughout.

Each piece or set in the exhibition is given a full-page illustration (over half of them in color) in the catalog, researched and written by Claudia Brown, Adjunct Curator of Oriental Art at the Museum. In addition to the superb photographs and the attendant descriptive entries, the catalog contains a preface detailing the history of the Clague Collection, an illustrated epilogue on the technique of cloisonné, both by Ronald Hickman, Director of the Phoenix Art Museum, a metalsmith himself, and a substantial essay by Brown. In fact, though modestly billed as an introduction, Brown's study surveys the literature, past and present, on cloisonné and chronicles the history of the medium in China, using as examples representative pieces in the exhibition. Taken together with the other sections of the catalog, this collects in a single volume the most important material on cloisonné, otherwise available scattered through a variety of books and articles.

The installation, created by David Restad of the Museum staff, emphasized the brilliance of cloisonné without insisting upon it. The viewer's introduction to the exhibition space—a floating wall, blank except for the show's title, and cut at the left to reveal an ornate urn supported on a cast bronze stand by a magnificent pair of dragons, rampant—suggested that each piece was meant to be examined by itself, with the resultant impressions contributing, finally, to an apprehension of cloisonné's technical intricacies and esthetic attributes. Widely spaced cases and low lighting, infused with the enamels' blue glow, reinforced this suggestion and encouraged careful viewing. The labels, admirably consistent and correct—identifying, for example, the marvelous dragon stand as a late 19th-century French work, imitative of, rather than contemporary with, the Ch'ing urn it holds—provided an austere contrast to the enamels themselves and returned the curious viewer to discover more.

The dating of cloisonné, for example, poses continual problems for curators and connoisseurs, there often being scant information upon which to base a judgement. Claudia Brown, in her introductory essay and catalog entries, has adapted to her own purposes the methods of assessment laid out by Sir Harry Garner in his important study of the subject, *Chinese and Japanese Cloisonné Enamels* (London: Faber and Faber, 1962). As employed by Brown, these methods are of particular interest to metal craftsmen in that they rely almost exclusively upon technical analysis and interpretation. Such criteria as a vessel's shape, the metal from which the vessel and the cloisonné wires forming the design were made, the presence or absence of split wires (the presence of split wires indicating that the wires were hammered out of an ingot and probably over-annealed, their absence suggesting a later advance, whereby metal was drawn through a die to form wires, thus saving the maker an immense labor), and the relative sophistication of both formal design and color scheme all yield convincing, albeit still circumstantial, evidence for placing a given piece in a given century.

The Phoenix Art Museum's exhibition offered viewers an opportunity to examine at close hand and in goodly number examples of the Chinese enameler's art, specifically, the cloisonné maker's art. Claudia Brown's catalog offers the same chance to the many who could not have seen the show itself; further, it carries within it solidly researched, carefully assembled, and thoughtfully written supplemental information—historical, technical, critical—to make it a logical addition to college and university libraries, as well as to the personal collections of interested metalsmiths.

The catalog, *Chinese Cloisonné: the Clague Collection* (Phoenix: Phoenix Art Museum, 1980. 184 Pages. Illustrated, including 48 full-color plates) can be mail ordered from the Phoenix Art Museum for $30 (hardcover) or $20 (paper), plus $1.50 for postage. Address requests to: Museum Shop, Phoenix Art Museum, 1624 North Central Ave., Phoenix, AZ 85004.

Above left: *Incense Burner in the Shape of a Dove*, Qing Dynasty; mid to late 18th century, 13.3cm h

Below left: *Incense Burner*, Ming Dynasty; first half 16th century, 12cm h

Far left: *Large Four-Sided Jar*. Ming to Qing Dynasty; mid-17th century, 30.6cm h

All photos: Collection of Robert and Marian Clague. Courtesy of the Phoenix Art Museum

Douglas Steakley
New Holloware and Jewelry
Precious Objects Gallery, Los Gatos, California
Spring 1980
by Walter Soellner

Douglas Steakley's holloware forms have always been highly crafted statements. However, his new raised forms are a grand departure from previous Danish influences: precious metals, highly finished surfaces and basically monochromatic coloration.

The new works exhibited at Precious Objects Gallery were heat treated in a controlled manner that captured all those elusive and wonderful colors seen during annealing. Leaving heavy planished areas and irregular surfaces, contrasted with more controlled areas, these generally asymmetrical forms have a spontaneous quality and informality that is refreshing after Doug's previous tightly controlled work.

There is an interesting parallel between the new titanium jewelry color range and Doug's copper pieces. It is probably not a coincidence that Steakley's Concepts Gallery held the first major showing of titanium jewelry in the United States over a year ago.

Another influence in this new direction for Doug, I surmise, is Paul Mergan's work. Paul, a Michigan metalsmith, also had an exhibition at Concepts last year and works holloware exclusively in copper. Knowing Doug, I have a feeling he has also been influenced by the silver-oxide fumed colorations of contemporary blown glass.

Those not able to see Steakley's pieces in person can refer to the June issue of *American Craft* magazine for an article on Concepts Gallery. The article features some of the most interesting pieces in Doug's Precious Objects Gallery show, including the two in the fantastic cover photo.

Copper Container, 7½x3"

Jamie Bennett—Enamelworks and Drawings
The Fred P. Giles Gallery, Eastern Kentucky University, Richmond, Kentucky
March 3–28, 1980
by Sarah Capps and George Arnott Civey, III (Butin-Chauvigny)

This exhibition of Jamie Bennett's work exemplified his continued interest in the exploration of gradient tone in enamel. Since his study of European enamel work of the 17th and 18th centuries in 1974, Bennett has mastered completely the time-honored techniques of this art. His interest in the enamel techniques of the past, he explains, is an attempt to see if "objects of fine quality can still be done in our time."

Bennett's imagery is contemporary and empirical—he has been influenced by sheepskins tacked on barn doors in rural Georgia and the grays of weathered cypress. He undoubtedly was impressed with the rich tonal variety in the soil of the Mississippi Delta during his stay in Memphis. The tonal relations in his enamels, in the spectrum from white to dark gray, recall the tones of the Southern fall, when white cotton fluff pushes open the gray-brown boll, which contrasts to the rich, weighty darkness of the black-gray Delta soil.

The artist feels that the "stacking" effect of these tones was influenced by the stacks of cloth in cutting houses of the fashion trade to which he was exposed as a youth. His mother was a fashion designer. The gray flannel suit, the blue blazer with gray pleated skirt or slacks, which have been the social hallmark of high society in his native Philadelphia, set off to the fullest the wearable pieces he has exhibited this season. The very titles of some of the pieces, *Shirt Triptych, Black Pattern #4, Silver Fleece, Tab Fleece* and *Raglan Sleeve Pendant,* demonstrate his sensitivity to his heritage. When queried about wearability, though, Bennett asserts that he is not at all "concerned with wearing," but is "concerned with images alone."

Bennett's current production exhibits well. His sensibility and articulation of processes in enamel have developed quickly. His work compares favorably with that of his teacher Robert Ebendorf. Both are drawn to the pristine quality of sterling silver. Bennett has exhibited with Ebendorf and demonstrates some of the special tactile and visual elements that one associates with the more mature artist.

The preliminary drawings, studies and plaques, usually six by ten inches in size, exhibited here along with the finished pieces are invaluable in assessing his preoccupation with gradient problems. One only wishes that collections being built currently would include more documentation of this sort as standard policy. All too often exhibits of pieces include the pieces alone. The student and art critic realize that the process of creation is multidirectional. It is only by checking the graphic process with the finished object that one can fully comprehend the time-consuming meticulousness of the production. Bennett himself believes that the "pieces have begun to mature," and that he has "made use of process to further his ideas."

Top: *Patterned Fragment Brooch,* sterling silver, copper, enamel, 2¼x2¼x½"

Right: *Patterned Fragment Brooch,* sterling silver, copper, enamel, 2x2x⅜"

Helen Shirk—Jewelry and Holloware
Concepts Gallery,
Carmel, California
May 1–18, 1980
by Lynda Watson-Abbott

This exhibition of nearly 20 pieces of work by Helen Shirk included jewelry, mostly large but wearable bracelets and pins and functional decanters and containers.

Helen's work has always been characterized by clean, sculptural volumes and linear or geometric elements. Thoughtful use of color, surface and finish further develops the form. The newer pieces reflected these concerns but were less complex than the earlier work. The statements were now abbreviated, yet concise and confident. Decorative elements served as hinges and mechanisms, leaving the forms to stand alone. The eye was led easily around the piece, and transitions were something to look forward to. The pins were simple but elegant, linear structures. Stones were used sparingly but effectively in some of the jewelry.

Helen's work is remarkable for its craftsmanship. Nowhere was this more apparent than in the holloware in this show. Each piece was thoughtfully designed and meticulously constructed. The work in this exhibition clearly showed the care, concern and pleasure Shirk feels for materials, processes and ideas.

Right: *Lidded Container*, silver, copper, 7½x5½x4½", 1979

Above: *Decanter*, silver, copper, brass, 10" h, 1979

Statements in Sterling/80
Sterling Silversmiths Guild of America
Lever House, New York City
June 3–20, 1980
by Meryl Greenberg

The annual Sterling Silver Design Competition was displayed again at Lever House in New York City. This event has traditionally been looked upon with great expectations by both students and instructors.

This year's first prize was awarded to Don Stuart, a graduate student at Rochester Institute of Technology. His *Tankard with Inlays* is a conservative statement, reminiscent of English metalwork at the turn of the century. The fabrication is impeccable. The use of planished and high-polished finishes creates a subtle, luminous surface. The inlaying of various semiprecious stones and exotic woods in the thumb piece of the lid is very effective. This reserved expression reveals the hand of a highly disciplined and concerned artist.

The remaining prize-winning entries were all technically sound, but hardly as well conceived or resolved. There are, however, several observations to be made about work that did not receive awards. Alice Vinograd took an innovative approach in the making of her entry entitled *Serving Forks*. This type of form is traditionally made from a flat piece of stock. The extension of the individually constructed hollow tines created a surprising and interesting final form. The *Container* by Rodgers Haskins was a simple and direct statement, the form very pleasingly balanced. The animated *Coffee Server* by Susan Ewing projected a very pert appearance, and the nickel silver inlay pattern added to its playfulness. The *Carpenter Cup* by Charles Radford cleverly integrated the images and symbols from the title, a characteristic most obviously lacking in the other pieces of this genre, where the conglomeration of disparate elements confused the viewer and made it difficult to discern the intent of the artist.

This show has left me with many questions, the most troublesome being, why were some of these pieces ever made? The percentage of poorly conceived, poorly executed and downright ugly items was very disconcerting. The pieces were all made under the auspices of an instructor, over a period of time. Where was the guidance? I realize the difficulty in trying to dissuade a headstrong student from following his own inclinations, but too many of the pieces displayed had glaring flaws which could have been avoided if clear alternatives were discussed at crucial junctures in their creation.

I have attended this show for about eight years and have noticed several trends. The first is that, overall, the number of strong entries has declined. It is pitiful if the best one can say about an object is that it is innocuous. In fact, the total number of entries prior to jurying has dropped 40% in the last four years. It is difficult to pinpoint the reason for this situation. The cost of materials and a certain cynicism about the type of pieces traditionally awarded prizes are certainly contributing factors.

If this competition is to continue as a vibrant showcase for future silversmiths, instructors would be well advised to scrutinize their students' progress more closely. The nurturing of a student's talents will help lead him to a greater clarity of vision. In the end, a poorly conceived object is the result of a faulty education.

Donald A. Stuart, *Tankard with Inlays*, planished sterling silver; inlay contains opals, agates, ivory and exotic woods. First prize winner

Armschmuck: An International Competition
Schmuckmuseum, Pforzheim, West Germany
July 12–August 31, 1980
by Ann Grundler

Armschmuck, jewelry for the arm, the fifth international jewelry competition held here, was entered by 215 artists, who submitted 372 works. Twenty-three participated from the United States, after Germany the largest group of 20 different countries.

In the preview that Dr. Falk, director of the museum, allowed me, I was impressed by both the qualities of craftsmanship and of design and ideas.

Among the award winners were: four equal awards of DM 2,000 ($1,000) to Beny Bronstein, Jerusalem, Israel; Harry Brookhuis, Alkmaar, Holland; Jaroslav Prásil, Usti nad Labem, CSSR and Victoria Wittek, Liederbach, Germany. Recognition was also received by Otto Kunzli and Brigitte Wöllmer from Germany with awards of DM 500 each.

I was especially attracted to how comfortably fitting most bracelets were and noted a variety of interesting closures: button-on loops, sliding bands that interlocked, box clasps on decorative heads, steel band folds and tension hoops. Many of the pieces were sensitive, delicate, some even fragile, a trend I observed in Germany at all levels of artistic and commercial jewelry, where heavy gold pieces are now considered *prozig* (ostentatious) and not avoided just because of the price of gold. However, work in all weights, styles and materials passed the first elimination round of the jurying and were well designed entities of their kind, as different as they were. Even many of the bracelets eliminated in the first round had interesting characteristics. Each of the 215 entering artists were represented in the show with at least one bracelet.

Above: Harry Brookhuis, *Armschmuck*, silver, steel, gold and leather. Photo: Werbestudio Meyer

Victoria Wittek, *Armschmuck mit Verbindung zur Hand*, sterling silver, steel and acrylic. Photo: Werbestudio Meyer

Necklace (Hijab), silver, 20th century, Saudi Arabia. Lent anonymously to the exhibition *Costumes from the Arab World* Renwick Gallery, Spring, 1980. A distinctive element in the Middle Eastern vestment system is the great importance given to women's jewelry. Jewelry is not merely adornment. It is a valuable asset, often representing a considerable part of a woman's personal wealth. Many items of Middle Eastern jewelry have the additional function of being amulets, shielding the wearer from the omnipresent danger of the Evil Eye (excerpt from the catalog to the exhibition). Photo courtesy National Collection of Fine Arts

Reader Survey Results

In the last two issues of the *Goldsmiths Journal* a questionnaire was run soliciting information from the membership of the Society of North American Goldsmiths. The return on the questionnaire was excellent, with 12% of those surveyed responding.

This questionnaire was intended to give a general profile of the SNAG membership. Its results will be evaluated and compared to results of future questionnaires to our readership. Perhaps the results pose more questions than they answer, but we share them with you and welcome your opinions and comments on them.

In looking at age groups, the survey showed that most respondants fall in the younger categories.

Age:	
20-25	13%
26-30	22%
31-35	23%
36-40	14%
41-45	8%
46-50	4%
51-55	4%
over 56	7%
no response	5%

Of the respondants, the majority (62%) were female; with 38% male. More were married (63%) than single (37%).

Many have worked in metal a substantial length of time.

under 5 years	22%
5 to 10 years	52%
11 to 20 years	16%
over 20 years	10%

Most people responding work in more than one area of metalsmithing, but jewelry came out on top.

jewelry	95%
holloware	39%
enameling	27%
blacksmithing	10%
other (mixed media, sculpture)	27%

Most respondants consider their work to be functional.

functional	63%
sculptural	13%
both	24%

Again, in materials used, many listed more than one, with silver the favorite.

silver	84%
gold	61%
copper, brass, bronze	53%
other nonferrous metals	16%
precious and semiprecious stones	24%
plastics	16%
enamels	10%
wood	10%
bone, ivory, shell, horn, jet	8%
found objects	3%

Many were reluctant to divulge how much they spend on materials, but of the 77% responding, most spend between $1,000 and $5,000. These figures are based on money spent by individual craftsmen. Some replied that the year when they set up or revamp their studios, they spend $15,000 or more on equipment and materials. We did not specify that teachers include allocations for materials for classroom or workshop.

$100-500	11%
$500-1,000	13%
$1,000-5,000	38%
$5,000-10,000	6%
$10,000-15,000	4%
$15,000-20,000	2%
$20,000-30,000	1%
$30,000-40,000	1%
over $50,000	1%
no response	23%

To the question, Where did you learn your craft? the overwhelming response was the university system.

college or university	71%
self-taught	21%
foreign schools	13%
workshops	13%
apprenticeships or on-job training	11%
craft schools	10%
books	6%
high school	5%
adult education	3%
museum courses	2%
trade school and father	1%

Annual income from metal correlatd very closely with outlay for materials.

0	6%
$100-500	16%
$500-1,000	8%
$1,000-5,000	30%
$5,000-10,000	15%
$10,000-15,000	7%
$15,000-20,000	3%
$20,000-30,000	5%
over $30,000	5%

Where do you sell your work? received a variety of answers.

private commissions	84%
craft galleries	56%
your studio	54%
craft fairs	30%
mail order	6%
craft coops	6%
sales agents	1%
private sales	1%
awards	1%

Most people had entered a juried show.

yes	83%
no	17%

The split was fairly even on the question of having lectured and given workshops.

yes	55%
no	45%

Where people get information about their craft provided some interesting results—multiple replies were common. A few added travel and experimentation.

books	92%
magazines	90%
other craftsmen	89%
lectures and workshops	74%
galleries and museums	69%
newsletters	57%
organization conferences	54%

However, in order of priority, the source most used was magazines, then books, other craftsmen, lectures and workshops, galleries and museums, newsletters and conferences.

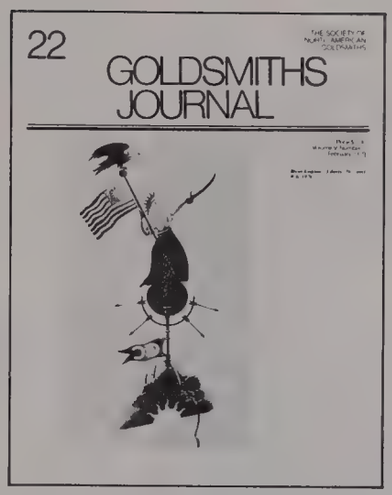
Many members visit galleries and museums monthly.

once or twice a month	42%
weekly	9%
once every two or three months	12%
once or twice a year	5%
infrequently	11%
no response	21%

According to the response, the major concerns of metalsmiths fall into a number of areas. Among them were quality in design, craftsmanship and function—to produce a well-made object. As one metalsmith stated, "Most of all, I struggle toward the creation of work that is basically sound, thoughtful, well crafted and is an expression of me and my life."

Very important also is the question of survival, not lowering professional standards or artistic level in order to sell work. "I'd rather work part time typing," one jeweler replied, "than make cheap $12 earrings to pay the rent."

There is great concern over the rising price of tools and materials. Learning new techniques and improving skills



through experimentation, a necessity in some cases due to rising costs, were also priorities. One respondant wanted "to see myself as part of an historical process of working metal and also to explore some new frontiers with space-age materials; to use the knowledge of the past to create the history of the future."

There were many comments about technical prowess and its place in the judging of metalwork, such as, "the concept is the most important thing. I'm getting tired of the emphasis on being a technical wiz," or "craftsmanship and technique should be appropriately placed as a means, rather than an objective of disproportionate importance.

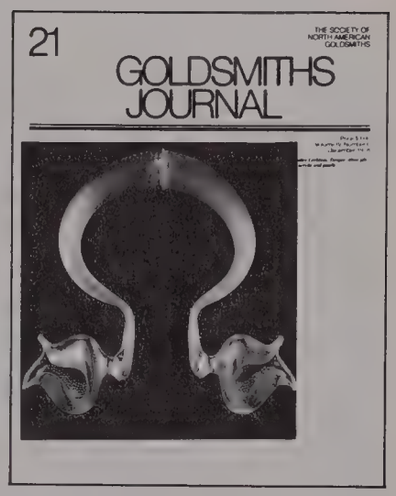
One respondant summed up the feelings expressed by many, "I just like to do it and I want to be the best I can."

In answer to the question on which part of the *Goldsmiths Journal* people read, the favorite section was upcoming events. This was followed closely by technical articles, information, exhibition reviews, people, editorials, organizational news and opportunities, in that order.

Finally, we asked for comments about *Goldsmiths Journal*. Many people, about a third of the respondants, were very satisfied with the magazine. Some thought it needed better photography and hoped there might be color illustrations in the future. A common complaint was that the magazine arrived too late for people to take advantage of the scheduled exhibitions and opportunities, and some noted that exhibition reviews were poorly written and pieces discussed in the review were not shown. The split was about even between those wanting more technical articles and those who thought the magazine was too technical now.

Suggestions for the future included coverage of more young and unknown people outside the academic community and outside the United States; more history; a survey of galleries; survival in the 1980s for craftsmen; and metal education.

There were comments about SNAG as an organization. A few thought membership fees were too high. Some liked and some



disliked the Pro-Associate membership distinction. Some felt that SNAG should encourage public interest in metalwork more and some commented favorably on the usefulness of SNAG services.

All in all, for us, the questionnaire succeeded in giving an insight into the membership of the Society and their needs.

This survey is only a beginning in getting to know our readers. We shall be sending out more questionnaires in the future and we are grateful for your response and reaction to them. This is one way that the magazine can continue to grow to meet your needs. Thank you.

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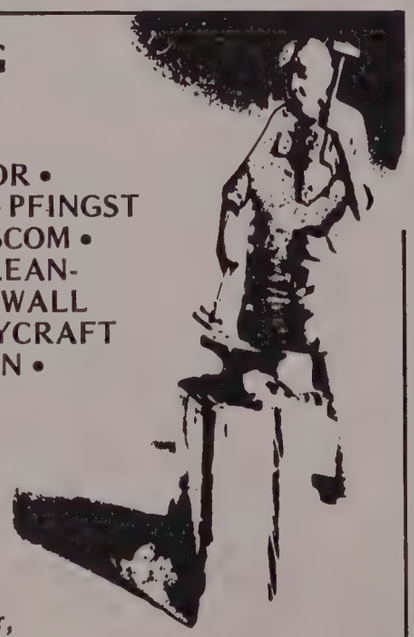

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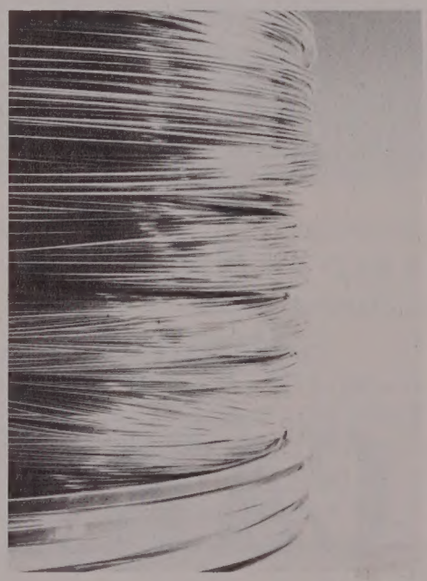

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This piece is something between a sculpture, a music box, and a musical instrument. It is a cow jaw bone that is filled with electronics and produces electronic music. It generates two simple melodies that interact and harmonize with each other. Of the many controls on the surface of the bone, four are screwdriver adjustable. Two of them regulate the speed of each melody, while another controls the pitch range and the last sets the volume of the music. By touching a tiny silver dot near the game board and the brass arm, three lit symbols, in a small screen near the thin end of the bone, change and dance in time with the music. This light pattern is turned off by touching the same dot and the toy man's head in the middle of the game board. Of the four tiny white switches, one activates a light sensor enabling the user to manipulate the music by changing the light over the bone, with hand movements. Another switch mobilizes a tiny photo of the artist in and out of the small window in the bone's surface, in time with the music. The other two switches are related to an automating circuit that can turn all of the previously mentioned functions on and off at selectable intervals. The "on" time can be either ½ second or 6 seconds, and the "off" time is adjustable between 12 seconds and 13 minutes. The game board is for playing an old victorian game called "morelles". The pegs are tiny turned ivory men and women. The men have tiny rubies set into their heads. Near the game board there is a small viewer that, when held up to the light and looked into, reveals colorful religious and mystical motifs. It is completely portable and the replaceable batteries in it last for a long time. It is 16 inches long. *Bob Natalini, 1979*